गीतासमीक्षा

GĪTĀ SAMĪKṢĀ



EDITED BY

E.R. SREEKRISHNA SARMA

PROFESSOR OF SANSKRIT

SRI VENKATESWARA UNIVERSITY

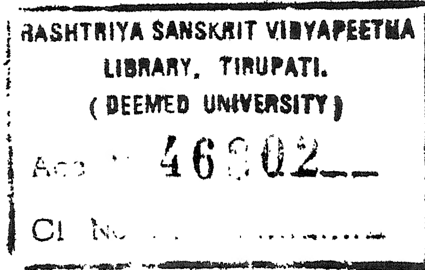
TIRUPATI

1971

Papers presented to the Seminar on the Gītā held in March 1970.

Printed and Published by
Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, 1971.

Price: Rs. 7–50



Copies can be had from:

The Registrar,
S.V. University,
TIRUPATI. (A. P.)

PREFACE

The Department of Sanrkrit of Sri Venkateswara University has great pleasure in placing before the scholars the volume of GĪTĀSAMĪKṢĀ, a collection of fifteen papers presented to the Seminar on the *Gītā* which took place on 7th, 8th and 9th, March, 1970. This was the fifth Seminar conducted by the Department since 1961. The purpose of the Seminar was to review and evaluate the interpretations of the *Gītā*, the perennial source of wisdom, encouragement and solace to millions of people all over the world, offered by religious Ācāryas, thinkers and social reformers through the ages. To what extent the Seminar could achieve this purpose is to be judged by the competent scholars in whose hands this volume is now being placed.

It is a matter of regret for us that we could not obtain papers on the interpretation of the *Gītā* according to Caitanya and B.G. Tilak the inclusion of which would have made this volume more complete. We could not also, again with regret, include in this volume the very illuminating and interesting addresses and general lectures delivered by eminent scholars during the Seminar.

Till 1965, conducting of a Seminar had been an annual feature in the Department. Then there was a gap of nearly five years before we could resume it. In this connection we are indeed grateful to our Vice-Chancellor, Dr. D. Jaganatha Reddy for his encouragement and keen interest in our endeavour. We are also thankful to the learned scholars who made the Seminar meaningful by contributing papers and participating in the discussions. Our thanks are also due to the University Press for cooperating with us in bringing out this volume.

EDITOR.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

By

Dr. D. JAGANATHA REDDY, MD.,
Vice-Chancellor,
Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati.

Professor Sri Krishna Sarma, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am happy to associate myself with this Seminar on the Lord's song (*Bhagavad Gītā*) to-day and express my thanks to Professor Sarma for affording me this opportunity. I am confident that this dialogue or discourse on the *Gītā* by eminent scholars gathered here will be unrestrictive and fearless in expressing opinions. May the youth seated in the last benches gather courage to participate and contribute to the richness of the seminar. It is up to the participants to leave an impress on the audience of the greatness and significance and the ennobling influence of the *Gītā* on mankind as a whole and in particular to the Hindu thought and action.

To me the essence of the *Bhagavad Gītā* appears to be fearless and desireless action. In the light of the Lord's song review and analyse your actions in the past and remodel for future action on the guide lines of the sayings in the *Gītā*. May the stalwarts assembled herein, this morning, through Socratic catechismal method arrive at the conclusion that action is to be encouraged and inaction to be discouraged and that in short was the message of Lord Krishna to us through Arjuna. May Lord Venkateswara, the Lord of the Seven Hills, give you all inspiration and courage to place your unbiased views at this seminar and avail of an opportunity to visit the Hill temple during your short stay here.

How am I competent to initiate your discussion on the *Gītā*, by way of a thought-provoking inaugural address. I feel diffident to do so, specially not to have learnt the alphabets of

Sanskrit which is necessary for the correct understanding and interpretation of the *Gītā*. When I glance through the commentaries by Aurobindo Ghosh, Arnold, Emerson, Radhakrishnan, Giriswamy and by a host of others in different languages, I am convinced that it has a great influence on man and his actions. Gandhiji rightly said that people must learn Sanskrit at least to read and understand the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Sanskrit had its origin, roots and growth in our country, the epics and Purāṇas were sung and written in Sanskrit and knowledge was disseminated to the distant frontiers of the world from Bharat through Sanskrit, but to-day it is sad to observe that Sanskrit is not patronised and our youth are denied the benefits that accrue through reading and writing of this great language. Language by no means is to be viewed as a religion. Sanskrit can be learnt by Shudras as well by the high caste. Vālmīki and Vyāsa wrote the great epics in Sanskrit. We have owing to jealousy extinguished Sanskrit.

Recitations of the *Gītā* by school children will go a long way to develop character. There is no harm in the child learning Sanskrit.

The *Gītā* contains the eternal truths of human life and has given the insight into the dignity of man. Spiritual hunger of modern age as typified by the Hippies and Yippies who visit Badrinath and Kedarnath seek refuge in the songs of Lord Krishna. It is a treatise on the art of life. The author of the *Gītā* is interested in man and his destiny – for man is the centre of creation. Our existence is brief, death is certain. Our human dignity requires us to accept pain and suffering for the sake of right.

Dharma can only be administered through the practice of the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* belongs to the people of the world and is above the narrow limits of a religion. Human conduct and behaviour towards a variety of situations are well narrated in the 700 verses covering eighteen chapters of the *Gītā* and it is up to the learned to disseminate the knowledge to the people of the country who have no access to the treasures of the *Gītā*. To

the Scholars and Pandits who are assembled here I would like to say that they should impart the message of the *Gītā* to the students who come to them for learning Sanskrit.

One begins to wonder regarding the *Gītā* if at all the dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna is the creative ingenuity of the author Vyāsa 2,500 years ago or is it a historical fact? Vyāsa deserves all our praise in having chosen grim battle situation to convey the wisdom of the Lord to a mortal like Arjuna. We think of God only in adversity and at no time in history is the need for the practice of the *Gītā* greater than to-day and this be done by every citizen immaterial of his faith in a particular religion. Let us keep in mind that the end does not justify the means and the means should not be mean. How many of us (whatever be our profession and position) think of the right thing at the right moment and act accordingly. It is in the interest of our children that they are made to recite a few verses from the *Gītā* daily. Stability, domestic or at State level, could be achieved by the application of the *Gītā* to the problems of the day.

I wish to place two of my thoughts for your consideration. It is not sole object of an University to produce graduates and parade them at an annual Convocation but the University has a higher function to perform. Its main function is to educate. Education is not merely absorption of knowledge but enlightenment. Enlightenment and promotion of culture at the University can only be done through a dialogue between the students and teachers on topics of this nature. Secondly, yesterday we witnessed *Aṣṭāvadhānam* and *Mushaira* of Urdu poets at the University. The Urdu poets did not appear to have had University education, but their performance did reflect vast learning and creative talents. The audience was spell-bound and there was thunderous applause and the University auditorium was transformed into an intellectual assembly and spiritual atmosphere prevailed which left a moralising influence over those present. May this seminar on the *Gītā* confirm the belief that intellectual power is superior to brutal force and that ultimately man acquires power through tranquility of mind.

Let us keep in mind the words of Giriswamy "Whenever I have troubles I recourse to the *Gītā* where I never fail to find a line to make me beam with a smile in the midst of all sorrow".

May I be permitted to appeal to the faculty members to keep in mind the following: Publish or Perish, extend or confine, enlighten and illuminate, promote knowledge and dispel darkness through your hard work and take your pupils to nobler tasks.

I wish to recite the following verse before I conclude:

गीताकल्पतरुं भजे भगवता कृष्णेन संरोपितं
वेदव्यासविवर्धितं श्रुतिशिरोबीजं प्रबोधाङ्कुरम् ।
नानाशास्त्ररहस्यशाखमरतिक्षान्तिप्रवालाङ्कितं
कृष्णाङ्घ्रिद्वयभक्तिपुष्पसुरभिं मोक्षप्रदं ज्ञानिनाम् ॥

I have great pleasure in inaugurating this Seminar and may your deliberations shed light on some of the yet mystical portions of the *Gītā*.

CONTENTS

Page

1. *Śrī Śaṃkara on the Bhagavad Gītā.* A.G. KRISHNA WARRIER 1

2. *The Gītā according to Rāmānuja* S.S. RAGHAVACHAR 13

3. *Central Teaching of the Bhagavad Gītā according to Śrī Madhvācārya* K.T. PANDURANGI 41

4. *Bhāskara on the Gītā* T.K. GOPALASWAMY AIYENGAR 51

5. *Gītā according to Abhinavagupta* V. VARADACHARI 65

6. *Nimbārka and the Bhagavad Gītā* K. DAKSHINAMURTHY 75

7. *Vallabha on the Gītā* V. ANJANEYA SARMA 87

8. *The Bhagavad Gītā and Vīraśaivism* G. MARULA SIDDAIAH 99

9. *The Bhagavad Gītā according to Radhasoamis* P. SRIRAMAMURTHY 109

10. *The Bhagavad Gītā* A.J. APPASAMY 121

11. *The Gītā and the Quran* SYED MOHIDEEN SHAH 131

12. *Aurobindo on the Bhagavad Gītā* K.C. VARADACHARI 141

13. *The Gītā as interpreted by Mahatma Gandhi* K. CHANDRASEKHARAN 149

14. *The Bhagavad Gītā – The Problems of the Text* K. KUNJUNNI RAJA 161

15. *The Essence of the Gītā according to Vinoba* E.R. SREEKRISHNA SARMA 169

A brief report of the Seminar on the Bhagavad Gītā 175

A.G. KRISHNA WARRIER

ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARA ON THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

A critical appreciation of Śrī Śaṅkara's views on BG., may appropriately begin with reference to the doctrine that BG. sets forth the quintessence[1] of the Upaniṣads and that its main conclusions harmonise with the teachings of the *Brahmasūtras*[2]. This however need not blind us to the fact that the emphasis in the *Gītā* does not necessarily fall on the doctrinal points stressed in the two other components of the *prasthānatraya*, viz., the classical Upaniṣads and the *Brahmasūtras*.

That the teachings of the classical Upaniṣads point to the non-dual Brahman as experienced at two different spiritual levels, the empirical and the metaphysical, or the *vyāvahārika* and the *pāramārthika*, is no longer seriously disputed by impartial students of these venerable texts; their two-fold revelation on *saguṇa* Brahman and *nirguṇa* Brahman constitutes the heart and soul of the perennial philosophy held in common by the most daring mystics among all the nations of the world. BG., too, recognizes that this empirically experienced world with its countless divisions into good, bad, and indifferent[3] demands a source, sustainer, and final haven. Verses such as '*ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavaḥ, mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravarttate*'[4], '*pitāham asya jagato*'[5], point to the *abhinnanimittopādānam*, the material-cum-efficient cause of the world, which, in the BS. has been defined as *janmādy asya yataḥ*[6], and, in the TU. set forth in the text *yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante*[7], etc. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the divine

1. sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopālanandanaḥ. pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīr bhoktā dugdhaṃ gītāmṛtaṃ mahat.
2. cf. BG. 13.4.
3. BG. 7. 13.
4. BG. 10. 8.
5. BG. 9. 17.
6. BS. 1.1.2.
7. ibid. 3.1.

teacher, of course, represents the *saguṇa* Brahman with all its plenitude of creative, sustaining, and retractive powers[8]. On the other hand, Śaṅkara points out that the *nirguṇa* Brahman, the transcendental Absolute of the Upaniṣads, is not only implicit in BG., but also explicitly set forth in several contexts. Verses 11-30 in Chapter II, verses 3 and 4 in Chapter XII, and verses 13-17 in Chapter XIII, among others, may be cited in this connection.

A point central to Śaṅkara's interpretation of BG., with a tremendous probative force of its own, deserves more than passing notice. What is the exact status of the *jīva*, the practitioner of religious life? '*mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*'[9] is the answer vouchsafed by the *Gītā*. Reality, which is non-dual Spirit,[10] and lifted altogether above the threefold difference,[11] cannot conceivably have *aṁśas* or parts of any kind. Alone among the commentators Śaṅkara explicitly raises this decisive issue: *nanu*[12] *niravayavasya paramātmanaḥ kuto'vayava ekadeśo'ṃśaḥ?*' Admittedly, spirit transcends time and space, the *sine qua non* of plurality,[13] and, therefore, it cannot conceivably admit of distinctions like parts and whole. Such is the insight behind Śaṅkara's contention that the relation in question has to be conceived, not as one obtaining between two eternally separate relata but as one that is purely empirical, more apparent than real, and that resembles the relation between a pot-space and the infinite space outside. Dr. Radhakrishnan seems to grant the substance of Śaṅkara's contention, but, later, qualifies it thus: 'When he *(jīva)* rises above his limitations he is not dissolved in the super-personal Absolute, but lives in Supreme and enters into a copartnership with God in the cosmic activity.'[14] It may be noted that the question of dissolution

8. cf. BG. Ch. 11.
9. BG. 15.7.
10. BS. 3.2.16 – āha ca tanmātram;
11. sajātīyavijātīyasvagatabhedarahitam.
12. cf. BSB. 2.3.43: na hi niravayavasya mukhyo'ṃśaḥ sambhavati.
13. cf. Russel, It is time and space that are the source of plurality; HWP., p. 783.
14. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavad Gītā*, pp. 328, 329.

into the Absolute does not rise in 'Śaṅkara's Advaita, if only because there is nothing real beside the Absolute which may dissolve', etc. If the phrase 'though the individual is a movement of the supreme'[15] is seriously meant, one may ask for further light on the significance of the alleged 'movement' in the non-spatial and non-temporal Absolute.[16]

Having placed the metaphysical status of the ultimate Reality in BG. beyond doubt, Śaṅkara proceeds to determine that of *Īśvara* in the strife-torn life of *saṃsāra* with its divided purposes, faltering steps, and irresistible spiritual urges. While, no doubt, BG., may be made to yield almost any meaning a sufficiently ingenious interpreter may set his heart on, as a document of perennial philosophy, it teaches its many ways to the peace that passeth understanding in response to the varying needs and capacities of the seeker after Truth. Śaṅkara expresses it thus : *tasyāsya gītāśāstrasya saṃkṣepataḥ prayojanaṃ paraṃ niḥśreysaṃ sahetukasya saṃsārasyātyantoparamalakṣaṇaṃ.*[17] The inscrutable passage from time to eternity as well as its correlative passage from eternity to time is totally controlled by *Īśvara*[18]. Passages like *mayādhyakṣena prakṛitiḥ sūyate sacarācaraṃ*[19], *māmeva ye prapadyante māyām etāṃ taranti te*[20], *sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi*[21], may be adverted to in this connection. Obviously, the world and human life in it are serious enough, according to Śaṅkara, to warrant *Īśvara's* direct intervention therein as *avatāra*. His statement of the doctrine of *avatāra* with which the *Gītābhāṣya* opens should render wary the critics who accuse him of dismissing the world, man, and God as merely illusory. The metaphysical problem faced by him must be appreciated aright. The immutable spiritual Reality, without

15. op. cit. p. 328.
16. cf. Bradley, Nothing perfect can move; A.R. p. 500.
17. BGB., Introduction.
18. BSB. 2.3.41.
19. BG. 9.10.
20. BG. 7.14.
21. BG. 18.66.

composition of any kind, has to be reconciled with the phenomenal manifold given in sense experience. A real change of *pariṇāma* is incompatible with Brahmn's non-dual and transcendental status. This situation entailes the recognition of a principle of apparent change or becoming and this is *Māyā*. BG. actually reports to it in its stament[22] of the phenomenon of *avatāra – ajo'pi sann avyayātmā bhūtānamiśvaro'pi san. prakṛtiṃ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmy ātmamāyayā; dehavāniva bhavāmi, jāta ivātmamāyayā, ātmano māyayā, nâ paramārthato lokavat.*[23] The meaning, knowledge or *saṅkalpa*, ascribed to the word *māyā*[24] would not explain how the immutable Spirit actually changes into the many. If, however, the spiritual part of Brahman alone is immutable, beside the changeable material and the changeable *jīva* components subsisting in inseparable relation to It – the so-called *aparā* and *parā prakṛtis*[25] the ultimate Reality in BG. will cease to be *tanmātraṃ.*[26] Śaṅkara employs the idea of *Māyā*, not so much to condemn and write off the world as an illusion or figment of human imagination, as to underscore its provisional and variable character. Śaṅkara's intention in this regard has been brilliantly embodied by Vidyāraṇya in the verse, '*tucchā-nirvacanīyā ca vāstavī cetyasau tridhā. māyā jñeyā tribhir bodhaiḥ śrautayauktikalaukikaiḥ*'[27]. *Māya* is just a hare's horn for the consciousness merged in the non-daulistic spirit; it is a riddle, neither real nor false, for the logical intellect; it alone is real for the mind that knows nothing of God. This threefold division, of course, is capable of endless refinements depending solely upon the critic's sense of values or spiritual insight.

In BG. however, which is at once the science of Reality, *Brahmavidyā*, and a manual of active religious life, *Yoga-śāstra*, the stress rightly falls upon the practice of the presence of God, on the processes by which the ego-centric life is syste-

....

22. BG. 4,6.
23. BGB; on 4.6.
24. Rāmānuja's *bhāṣya* on this verse.
25. BG. 7.5.
26. BS. 3.2.16.
27. PD. 6.1.30.

matically converted into the theocentric life. In the light of his non-dual metaphysics, Śaṅkara's insistence that knowledge alone can liberate human consciousness from the travails of sāmsāric life is easily seen to be logical, nay, inevitable. Marvellous confirmation of this doctrine of Śaṅkara may be gathered from many a passage in BG. None, perhaps, is more eloquent than the utterance '*nāśayāmyātmabhāvastho jñānadīpena bhāsvatā*'[28] Only the light of knowledge may dispel the darkness of ignorance, *ajñānjaṃ tamaḥ*.[29] BG.'s diagnosis of man's malady as spiritual blindness or *ajñāna* is the same as that which Śaṅkara's system offers; and, so also, is the remedy viz., *jñānadīpaḥ*. The point to note is the incompatibility of this prescription with any diagnosis other than the Advaitic one. If evil in life has a metaphysical status of its own, no knowledge will exorcize it. It will persist, like the *prakṛti* in the classical Sāṃkhya, a lasting threat to human wholeness and freedom. Śaṅkara's interpretation makes the essence of human bondage *moha* and *śoka*, essentially forms of ignorance. Therefore *jñāna* may very well annihilate it. In the light of the decisive importance of this saving knowledge, verses like *tad viddhi praṇipātena*[30], etc,. may seem to possess the immense importance traditionally associated with them. If, on the contrary, *jñāna* in this context relates only to the atomic *cit* or *jīvātman*, an immense sphere of reality will remain outside its purview, and emancipation evade the aspirant.

Relevant also is the question of the means leading to the saving knowledge. In this context a hierarchy of such means, direct and indirect, may be thought of. Śaṅkara's interpretation of the Gītā does not unfairly inflate *jñāna* at the expense of *karma* and *bhakti* or vice versa. He takes an objective view of the relevance of the threefold means to the practical achievement of emancipation. One has to go on digging the well, fervently, till the water is found, but when the country

28. BG. 10.11.
29. ibid.
30. BG. 4.34.

around is flooded there is no virtue in keeping on digging.[31] This image suggests the heart of Śaṅkara's view of the mutual relations among *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna*.

Inherent in the Vedāntic theory and practice is the sane concept of *adhikāra*. It is frankly recognised that in view of the different aptitudes and capacities of the aspirants after the fruits of religious life, various routes leading to them are all valid[32]. All must, however, begin with the discipline of activities[33], which according to Śaṅkara are a necessary means to secure *cittaśuddhi* or mental purity. Before spiritual orientation is effected, the law of instincts alone prevails. Thus was Arjuna momentarily overpowered and he shrank from the stern voice of duty which bade him shed the blood of his kith and kin. The first step out of his impasse is denoted by the command to act without craving for the fruits of such action. Were activity inherent in the soul of man as non-advaitic teachers declare on the basis of the *sūtra, kartā śāstrārthavattvāt*,[34] the deeper insight embodied in the verse, *prākṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ ahaṃkāravimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate*[35]/would prove unintelligible. Indeed, as Śaṅkara time and again insists, action cannot be predicated of the timeless, non-dual Reality, that is *kūṭastha* or immutable. Here again Śaṅkara is proved right by the *Gītā's* utterances like '*naiva kiñcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattvavit*'[36]. The perfected sage or *tattvavit* preceives that acts do not pertain to the Self. Hence aphorisms like *kartā śāstrārthavattvāt* and injuctions like *yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ*[37], are relevant only to the unenlightened, *atattvavidaḥ*. This is confirmed by two celebrated affirmations in the *Gītā* : *yastvātmaratir eva syāt...... tasya kāryaṃ na vidyate*[38] and *sarvakarmāṇi manasā......naiva kurvan na*

31. cf. BG. 2.46.
32. BG. 4.11.
33. cf. 3.5 8; 4.15; 18.45; 46. and 56, etc.
34. BS. 2.3.33.
35. BG. 3.27.
36. BG. 5.8.
37. 3.30; 11.34, etc.
38. 3.17.

kārayan[39]. It is obvious that affirmations like these, strewn widely over the *Gītā*, harmonize most naturally with the Advaitic metaphysics of Śaṅkara; with other systems they are in clear contradiction. If the self of man is an agent, as a matter of course, to hold '*naiva kiñcit karomi*'[40], is to nurse a falsehood.

The heart, then, of Śaṅkara's insistance that *jñāna* and *karma* would not combine is the metaphysical nature of each individual. It will, therefore, be appropriate to advert to a striking confirmation of the doctrine of the non-duality of Self, offered by Schrodinger, the late physicist and Noble laureate in his Oxford lectures published under the title, *What is Life?* He highlights the metaphysically significant fact that the content of the term 'I' is never experienced as a plurality, unlike material objects scattered in space or events determined by time. The content of the term 'I' is uniquely experienced by the thinker as his deepest Self. The term 'we' does not, of course, mean 'I' and 'I' but 'I' and 'you' or 'I' and 'he'. If, thus, the metaphysical subject, the conscious spirit in man, is non-dual, it stands to reason that all the consequences Śaṅkara draws from his doctrine of spirit's non-duality and immutability should logically follow. Relevant among these are the eternal prefection of the Spirit and its boundless freedom from the obligation to act. Further there follows also the imperative need to renounce the empirical activities ignorantly ascribed to the Self enmeshed in the web of *Māyā*. This need, of course, is not felt equally keenly by all aspirants due to their varying degrees of spiritual eligibility[41]. But as a result of the increasing awarness of the sole reality of the Spirit the aspirant's aversion to the realm of objects will wax till, at long last, he gives up all *dharmas* and *adharmas*, injuctions and prohibitions, being solely pre-occupied with the quest after perfection or Self-realization. Seen against such a back ground Śaṅkara's interpretation of the *carama-śloka*[42] as a clarion call to renounce the world and fearlessly fol-

39. 5.13.
40. B.G. 5.8.
41. BSB. 1.1.1 which discusses *sādhanacatuṣṭayam*.
42. BG. 18.66.

low the Spirit is clearly in tune with the Upaniṣadic injunction: *brāhmaṇā putraiṣaṇāyāś ca vittaiṣaṇāyāś ca lokaiṣaṇāyāśca vyutthāyātha bhikṣācaryaṃ caranti,*[43] etc.

Mukti or arrival at the goal of spiritual perfection is not necessarily a post mortem event. In the light of his own experience and the teachings of the triple texts, Śaṅkara upholds the doctorine of *jīvanmukti.* He explains that the *sthitaprjaña* is the fully awakened Self who perceives *'ahamasmi paraṃ brahma*[44]. In his comment on BG. 5.24 Śaṅkara repeats, "*brahmanirvāṇaṃ brahmaṇi nirvṛtiṃ mokṣam iha jīvanneva prāpnoti.* "It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the concept of *jīvanmukti* in the *Gītā*. It is the indubitable proof of the validity and fruitfulness of religious life, the most eloquent and convincing argument to silence the strident voices of scepticism and nihilism. That the non-advaitic commentators of the *Gītā* cannot take the relevant verses[45] at their face value but are obliged either to ignore or water down the idea is, perhaps, the most solid proof in favour of the Advaitic interpretation of the *Gītā*.

The Advaitic interpretation makes it possible to subject the claim of the *jīvanmukta* to the test of practical life. On the one hand the *jīvanmukta* must conform to the eternal pattern set forth in Chapter II, Chapter XII, and Chapter XIV under the designations *sthitaprajña*, *akṣaropāsaka*, and *guṇātīta*. This constitutes a sort of public test. On the other hand, an infallible private test also is available for the *jīvanmukta* to ensure that he does not fall a prey to self-deception. Complete annihilation of *kāma*, *krodha*, and *lobha*, lust, anger, and greed, the three gate-ways to hell,[46] is the sure test of liberation in life. The *jīvanmukta* is *nistraiguṇya*;[47] he has transcended the realm of *guṇas*, and, as such, is no longer subject to imperatives of any

43. BU. 3.5.1; 4.4.22. MNU. 24.1; 10.5; JU.4.
44. BGB. 2.54; cf. BSB. 4.1.15.
45. BG. 5.24, 26.
46. BG. 16.21.
47. BG. 2.45.

kind. *Nistraiguṇye pathi vicaratām ko vidhiḥ ko niṣedhaḥ?*[48] Through him, who has no trace of an ego or private will left in himself,[49] the cosmic will of *Īśvara* and his *avatāra* in the world fulfils itself without impediment, he is the infallible instrument in the hands of God[50]. Like the Lord, the *jīvanmukta* spontaneously spends himself in the service of all living beings, *sarvabhūtahite rataḥ*[51]; as a *kṛtakṛtya*, who has reached his supreme goal, he is now the most efficient instrument of God to promote *lokasaṅgraha*, the true well-being of the world. As a *śreṣṭha* he sets up the life pattern for others to follow.[52]

At this stage it is necessary to point out that Śaṅkara's theory of *jñānakarmasamuccaya-niṣedha*, the incompatibility of knowledge and action, has to be understood in a technical sense, a point seldom noted by his critics. The action he rules out as incompatible with enlightenment is that which is performed with a sense of egoistic[53] agency and the craving for the results thereof. In contradistinction the action of the *muktas* and the incarnations like Kṛṣṇa are never egoistic.[54]

Another matter of critical importance also calls for clarification. If the BG. is understood in the light of Śaṅkara's interpretation it is necessary to specify the status of the seeker after perfection or *mumukṣu*. There is, after all, no ontologically real entity *cit* or *acit* beside the non-dual Spirit. It is obvious, however, that this problem cannot be raised from the point of view of the non-dual Absolute, precisely because it is non-dual. It may, however, legitimately be raised in the sphere of *vyavahāra*, the sphere of empirical life, which includes the *prātibhāsika* or the illusory sector of life but not the realm of *para-*

---

48. JMV. P. 382.
49. cf. jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā, BG. 4.37.
50. BG. 11.33.
51. BG. 5.25; 12.4.
52. BG. 3.21.
53. yasya tu jñānamutpannam tasya lokasaṃgarhārtham karmaṇi pravṛttasya yat pravṛttirūpaṃ dṛśyate na tat karma yathā bhagavato vāsudevasya... BGB. 2.11.
54. BG. 3.22.



mārtha or the metaphysically real. Here, as a fact, ignorance, finitude, sorrow, and bondage are felt[55] and whosoever feel the weight of the yoke feel also impelled to shake it off by treading one of the paths of religious life taught by the *Gītā* according to their *adhikāra*. The guarantee that such whole hearted effort will be crowned with success is furnished by Śaṅkara's Advaita system alone[56], According to the non-advaitic interpretations finitude of spirit, may atomicity, is a metaphysical truth and therefore proves an insurmountable barrier on the way to *abhaya* and perfection : *dvitīyād vai bhayaṃ bhavati, na tu tad dvitīyam asti*[57].

The question of the ultimate status of the *mukta* whose body falls off, of the *videhamukta*, vis-a-vais Śaṅkara's interpretation of the *Gītā*, may also be briefly noiiced. Dr. Radhakrishnan[58] seems to uphold the idea of the eternal, distinctive, subsistence of the liberated individual in the super-personal Absolute, and in support, he quotes the half-verse, *nivasiṣyasi mayyeva ata ūrdhvaṃ na saṃśayaḥ*[59]. Verse 14.2 may also, perhaps, be quoted in support of such a view. But the relevant question is what we are to make of the words in question. The plea for a continuation, however transmuted, of the liberated Self by the side of or within Brahman is based on the notion of *jīva's* independent metaphysical status, which Śaṅkara has repudiated with excellent reason. Vide his comment on *mamaivāṃśaḥ*, etc; cited earlier, Or, such a plea may stem from the fear of loosing something valuable, which as a distinctive individual, *jīva* possesses at present. Whatever of value the individual *jīva* may claim at present is wholly derivative from Brahman, the source of all values, as the sun is the source of all light and warmth. Far from the liberated individual losing any thing in Brahman, all that is valuable in him will be infinitized. It is a case of the drop becoming the sea and not getting lost in it,

55. BSB. 4.1.3; cf. kasya punar ayaṃ aprabodhaḥ? iti cet yas tvaṃ pṛcchasi tasya ta iti vadāmaḥ.
56. BG. 4.10; 24 & com.
57. BU. 1.4.2; 4.3.30;
58. *The Bhagavad Gītā*, pp. 328, 329.
59. BG. 12.8;

for Brahman is the sea of immortality[60]. Inspired by such a vision Śaṅkara affirms the *brahmabhāva*[61] of the *mukta*.

Before closing this account of Śaṅkara's interpretation of the *Gītā*, I may be permitted to offer a mathematical analogy to render the Advaitic position outlined above more intelligible and plausible. That a non-dual Reality, while apparently suffering fragmentation may, neverthless, retain its integrity intact is suggested by the infinite series $1 = \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{32}$ ...... In each of these terms, on the right hand side is the integral unity wholly presnt. More significantly still, each of these infinite number of terms may be brought over to the left and apparently split up into a further series of infinite terms. This equation puts in a mathematical nutshell the intellectual substance of Śaṅkara's advaitic metaphysics, the solid basis of his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

60. cf. The *Gospel of Ramakrishna*, p. 420; Mylapore, 1947.

61. cf. BG. 5.24; 6.27, 7·19; 14.26, 18.3.54.

S.S. RAGHAVACHAR

THE GĪTĀ ACCORDING TO RĀMĀNUJA

I

While admitting that the *Gītā* was promulgated to rescue Arjuna from his agonizing mood of retreat from battle and to inspire him to heroism, Rāmānuja says that the occasion was used by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to present afresh the teachings of the Vedānta. On his analysis Arjuna possesses all the qualifications required for the grace of the preceptor and God. He is अस्थानस्नेहकारुण्यधर्माधर्मभियाकुल and प्रपन्न. It is to be noted that, unlike Suyodhana, Arjuna does not get into this anxiety out of fear or uncertainty about the issue of the war. His is a crisis of affection and his uncertainty concerns the righteousness of his cause. Hence he implores Śrī Kṛṣṇa to enlighten him and resolve the moral conflict oppressing him. Making him the '*vyāja*', occasion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa brings down, as it were, to humanity at large this supreme scripture.

Rāmānuja sharply defines the theme of the teaching. It is स्वविषयं भक्तियोगम्. In other words it is *bhakti* directed to the supreme Being, incarnated as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is also enunciated that this *bhakti* is ज्ञानकर्मानुगृहीत. The substance of the teaching, therefore, is two-fold: It affirms the supreme Reality and inclucates devotion towards it.

In our attempt, to present Rāmānuja's interpretation, which has to be necessarily brief, these two constituents of the teaching are to receive justice. The first concerns the metaphysical thesis of the text and the second constitutes the formulation of the ideal pathway of life.

Anticipating the exposition, one might say, with Vedānta Deśika that all the commentators concur on this two-fold theme.

Differences might arise in the specific articulation of the grand subject-matter, but the central direction of thought is universally admitted.

पिशाचरन्तिदेवगुप्तशङ्करयादवप्रकाशभास्करनारायणार्य-
यज्ञस्वामिप्रभृतिभिः स्वं स्वं मतमास्थितैः परश्शतैर्भाष्यकृद्भिः
अस्मत्सिद्धान्ततीर्थकरैश्च भगवद्यामुनाचार्यभाष्यकारादिभि-
रविगीतपरिगृहीतोऽयमत्र सारार्थः – भगवानेव परं तत्त्वम्,
अनन्यशरणैर्यथाधिकारं तदेकाश्रयणं परमधर्मः – इति.

With the recognition of the commonly admitted core of the teaching of the *Gītā* as a fitting preamble, we may proceed to consider the metaphysical teachings of the *Gītā* according to Rāmanujā's interpretation.

II

Nature or *Prakṛti* is pictured more or less as it came to be described by the Sāṃkhya system at a later philosophic epoch with some fundamental differences. The conception of the manifest physical universe as evolving out of a single primordial unmanifested material principle is there. This is adumbrated several times. The main stages of the formation of the physical universe such as *mahat* and *ahaṅkāra*, are mentioned even as they come to be elaborated later in Sāṃkhya. There is no hint of an atomic cosmology such as that of Buddhism, Jainism or Vaiśeṣika. The three *guṇas, sattva, rajas*, and *tamas* are clearly stated as characterizing *Prakṛti*. Their functions are specifically noted. A magnificent and many sided use is made of the *guṇas* in the ethical and spiritual prescriptions. Nothing in creation is bereft of these *guṇas*, and wisdom lies in developing the *sattva* to the utmost dominance. The culmination of that development of *sattva* lies in the ultimate leap from the realm of the *guṇas* to the order of being transcendent of the *guṇas*. All this is common material and Rāmānuja's account conforms to the common pattern of thought.

The *Gītā* describes *Prakṛti* in its aspect of enveloping the *Jīva* with ignorance concerning the supreme reality as '*Māyā*'.

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिस्सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥
दैवीह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया । (VII. 13, 14.)

The problem at once arises whether the *Gītā* does not regard the external world of matter as ultimately unreal. Rāmānuja rejects emphatically such an interpretation. For him *Māyā* means 'विचित्रकार्यकरी' an existent entity with wondrous fecundity, producing a bewildering variety of effects. An illusion is called *Māyā*, because, in it a thought comes into being without the causal operation of the objective sittution and thereby the normal rule of the object producing the related thought is circumvented. This too is an instance of wondrous productivity.

The result of this interpretation is that nature is real and non-illusory. Rāmānuja does not see anywhere in the *Gītā* the doctrine of the unreality of the external world. Nature is not an illusion but in the abundance of nature's wondrous powers, there is also the power productive of illusions. Illusion is not constitutive of nature but is one of nature's possible operations.

If *Prakṛti* is an ontological verity and not a mere phenomenal presentation, its exact status requires to be determined. Is it a selef-existent reality, explicable by itself? The *Gītā*, for Rāmānuja, contains explicit repudiation of such a Naturalism. The verse

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ (VII. 4.)

does not mean for him 'My *Prakṛti* is divided eight-fold', rather it means 'this *Prakṛti* divided eight-fold is mine': प्रकृतिरियं...... मदीयेति विद्धि.

The fact of *Prakṛti* belonging to God is the focal point of the assertion. Often *Prakṛti* is spoken of as one with God, in order to bring out the reality of divine immanence. The specific powers of the different aspects of nature are the results of the presence of the divine in them. This immanence necessitates the adoption of the language of pantheism. But it is not the usual shallow pantheism, for to God belongs the higher *Prakṛti* also called the *Jīva*, and the two together also do not exhaust God's glory. In the cosmic form they in their entirety are 'एकस्थ' interpreted by Rāmānuja as 'एकदेशस्थ'. They constitute a part of the realm of being belonging to God. The appropriate word descriptive of nature's ontological status is '*Vibhūti*'. The tenth chapter is devoted to the portrayal of some select *Vibhūtis* of God. Nature is not self-supporting, it is not undivine; on the contrary it proclaims the grandeur of the deity. According to Rāmānuja contemplation of the creative immanence of God in nature brings about the intensification and enhancement of the devotion to God. 'स्वैश्वर्यस्वकल्याणगुणगणप्रपञ्चानुसंधानेन भक्तिविवृद्धिप्रकारमाह' (X. 4.) is his characterization of the *vibhūti-yoga*. The concept of *Vibhūti* as applied to Nature negates the illusionist hypothesis and also the naturalistic denial of the Supracosmic ground of nature. It also corrects the pantheistic error of regarding it as exhaustive of the divine abundance. The philosophy of nature presented in the *Gītā*, according to Rāmānuja, eliminates these three errors of illusionism, naturalism and uncritical pantheism, all the three of which are at bottom forms of atheism. The final truth is summed up in the verse:

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ (X. 42.)

III

The finite self, the individual soul, is commonly named the *Jīva*. We will now turn to the teaching of the *Gītā* concerning it in the light of Rāmānuja's elucidation. This is the higher *Prakṛti* of God according to the 7th chapter.

The essential nature of the self is indicated by the term *Kṣetrajña* even as the *Brahma-sūtra* indicates it by the word *jña*. The fundamental truth about the self is that it is the subject of knowledge, the knower. It is described 'अप्रमेय' and for Rāmānuja it means that it is the प्रमाता.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत् परम् ॥ (V. 16.)

This verse proves for Rāmānuja that *jñāna* is the essential character of the self. From this single fact of the self being the knower in its fundamental nature, all its other basic characteristics are deduced by Rāmānuja. The second chapter sets forth the immortality of the *Jiva*. The crucial verse is:

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताश्शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ (II. 18.)

For Rāmānuja अप्रमेय means प्रमाता and the fact of being the knower implies integral self-identity and hence the non-composite character and the consequent impossibility of disintegration. Here we have the basic epistemological argument for immortality. It is this argument that the *Brahma-sūtra* also advances against the Buddhist theory of the serial self. Kant recognizes this principle in his doctorine of the 'unity of apperception' but refuses to take metaphysical cognizance of the principle. It is just unity of function and not unity of being for him. But the whole being of the self lies in the function of knowing and it is waste of ingenuity not to see in the unity of function, the disclosure of the unity of being. His further suggestion that the self may perish by attenuation of consciousness though its substantive nature may remain non-composite, overlooks the possibility that the substance in th Soul-substance is also of the nature of consciousness. For Rāmānuja *jñāna* is the *dharmi-svarūpa* of the Ātman in so far as it is self-aware and it is *dharma-bhūta* in so far as it exercises itself in the cognizing of other existents. Rāmānuja counters the theory that there is one universal self and the plurality of selves is just a phenomenal encrustation. For him the verse

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ (II. 12.)

is decisive on the question. The verse does not embody the vestige of popular pluralism as alleged but actually takes up a pluralistic attitude. The plurality of individual selves is as much a fact as their immortality. Further, the process of Lord Kṛṣṇa instructing Arjuna or for that matter, of any enlightened preceptor imparting Vedānta to his disciple, implies that the plurality of individual selves is a metaphysical fact. This plurality is not just an illusion forming part of bondage. The emancipated souls are described as if their many-ness remains unimpaired.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत् परम् ॥ (V. 16.)

Commenting on this verse Rāmānuja says:

तेषामिति विनष्टाज्ञानानां बहुत्वाभिधानादात्मस्वरूपबहुत्वं न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं इत्युपक्रमावगतमत्र स्पष्टतरमुक्तम् । न चेदं बहुत्वमुपाधिकृतं, विनष्टाज्ञानानामुपाधिगन्धाभावात् ।

Even as being the subject of knowledge is fundamental to the self, the self is also a free agent in relation to action. कर्तृत्व is a real feature of the self.

Freedom of will, ethical initiative or conative spontaneity is characteristic of the self. Will is not to be ascribed to the psychophysical frame of personality; nor is the individual self a mechanical instrument of divine action. It is true that in the stage of sāṃsāric degradation the *Jīva* works as if under the compulsions of nature. But even that is due to its own free self-abrogation. In the exalted phase of godliness it surrenders itself to God, its being, will and destiny being finally offered without reservation to Him; but this Self-surrender is a free act

of choice and voluntary dedication and marks the beginning of enhanced activity for the glory of God, a willing adoration. In neither extreme is freedom annihilated, in the former it is abrogated by misguided choice and in the latter it is sublimated in self-effacing devotion. In the intermediate levels of mundane life free exercise of choice and responsibility is present more unmistakably. Rāmānuja discusses this question under the 3rd, 5th, 13th and 18th chapters. His essential position stands expressed, in the following passage:

एतदुक्तं भवति — परमात्मना दत्तैस्तदाधारैश्च करणकलेबरादिभिः तदाहितशक्तिभिस्स्वयं च जीवात्मा तदाधारस्तदाहितशक्तिस्सन् कर्मनिष्पत्तये स्वेच्छया करणाद्यधिष्ठानाकारं प्रयत्नं चारभते । तदन्तरवस्थितः परमात्मा स्वानुमतिदानेन तं प्रवर्तयतीति जीवस्यापि स्वबुद्ध्यैव प्रवृत्तिहेतुत्वमस्ति; यथा गुरुतरशिलामहीरुहादि चलनादिफलप्रवृत्तिषु बहुपुरुषसाध्यासु बहूनां हेतुत्वं विधिनिषेधभाक्त्वं चेति ॥ (XVIII. 14, 15.)

That कर्तृत्व does imply some change in the agent goes without saying and the eternal nature of the self as conceived by Rāmānuja does not exclude the possibility of all types of change. The notion of the self as a moral agent denies materialistic determinism, the view of God's omnipotence as excluding human freedom and the theory of a totally immutable self. Connected with कर्तृत्व is the further characteristic of the self, भोक्तृत्व. The *Gitā* itself enunciates:

पुरुषस्सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते । (XIII. 20)

The self is that in which experiences of the nature of enjoyment and sorrow take place. The mundane emotive dualities as well as the higher values have the *Jivātmān* as the enjoyer, in reality the fact that he is the knower carries the implication that he is the enjoyer. Enjoyment is nothing but a maturation of contemplation when the object of contemplation is such that it conduces to the fulfilment of the self contemplating. When the self is properly discerned and the objects sought by it are properly

evaluated the self is impelled to seek God by way of knowing and in Him it finds its fullest enjoyment. In this final stage *jñāna* is the same as *bhoga*. Rāmānuja does not countenence the hypothesis of a phenomenal self as the subject of enjoyment. Enjoyment implies some mutation, no doubt, but a self that excludes all the dynamism involved in knowing, willing and feeling is almost a non-self. In criticism of the Sāṃkhya position Rāmānuja says:

भोक्तृत्वं बुद्धेरेव संपद्यते इति आत्मसद्भावे प्रमाणाभावश्च स्यात्; पुरुषोऽस्ति भोक्तृभावादिति हि तेषामभ्युपगमः। (*Śrī-bhāṣya*, (II – 3. 37.)

In the final analysis *jñāna* is the same as *ānanda* and as such the knowing self has to be a *bhoktṛ*.

The *Gītā* has the following pronouncements on another aspect of the self.

पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः। (V. 19.)

इहैव तैर्जितस्सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः। निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म (V. 19.)
आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन। ...स योगी परमो मतः॥ (V. 32.)

The main principle enunciated herein is affirmed by Rāmānuja to mean the equality of all indidual selves in their basic nature. He says आत्मयाथात्म्यविदः ज्ञानैकाकारतया सर्वत्र समदर्शिनः। विषमाकारस्तु प्रकृतेः, नात्मनः।

While Rāmānuja asserts the irreducible plurality of the finite selves as part of the teaching of the *Gītā*, he upholds with equal force that the selves are mutually equal in nature and status on the basis of these clear statements of the text.

After these considerations it is necessary to discuss the central problem in the doctrine of the individual self. According-

ing to Rāmānuja the fifteenth chapter sharply differentiates *Puruṣottama*, the supreme Being, from the individual self. The individual self in its bound condition is named *kṣara* and in its liberated and perfected state it becomes describable as *akṣara*. Rāmānuja explains the reasons for the two designations. Now God named *Puruṣottama* in the chapter is declared as being different from, अन्य as surpassing उत्तम and as going beyond अतीत the individual self whether the latter be bound or liberated. That the *akṣara* is to be interpreted as the liberated self is insisted upon on the following ground: it is a *Puruṣa* and hence cannot be *Prakṛti* either in the causal state or in the manifested and developed state, and it is said to be transcended by *Puruṣottama* and hence cannot be the same as the supreme spirit. This distinction is present even in the seventh chapter where the *Jīva* is named the higher *Prakṛti* of *Īśvara* and not identical with him. While this distinction between *Īśvara* and *Jīva* by virtue of *Īśvara's* transcendence is an undeniable part of the doctrine of the *Gītā* according to Rāmānuja, there is another complementary thesis. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that He is the *Kṣetrajña*, individual self also. Here some kind of identity is surely meant and it cannot be the literal kind of identity that would cancel divine transcendence. Rāmānuja understands by this identity, *Īsvara's* immanent control of the *Jīva* and His eternal appropriation of it as His own *Vibhūti*. God sustains the *Jīva*, actuates it and uses it and hence He may be said to include it, even as the finite soul includes the body within the totality of its life. The fruitful and illuminating conception that would bring together and explain God's transcendence of the *Jīva* and His identity with it, is given according to Rāmānuja in the fifteenth chapter.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः । (XV. 7.)

This doctrine of the *Jīvātman* as an अंश or part of the *Paramātman* does justice to all the varied pronouncements of the text on the relation of the two. Transcendence and identity are to be taken as aspects of the comprehensive fact of God's possesssion of the *Jīva* as a part of His totality of being.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः puts together and explains the two partial statements उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः and क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि. While interpreting मत्परं in the controversial phrase अनादि मत्परं Rāmānuja says अहं परो यस्य तन्मत्परम्। भगवच्छरीरतया भगवच्छेषतैकरसं ह्यात्मस्वरूपम्।

The three-fold implication of divine immanence in the *Jīva* as furnishing its आधार, नियंता and शेषी makes the *Jīva* describable as the body of *Īśvara*. All this wealth of import is conveyed by the expression अंश.

IV

It remains now to attempt an intergrated statement of the nature of God according to the *Gītā* as expounded by Rāmānuja. Undoubtedly this constitutes the crowning phase of the metaphysics of the *Gītā*.

It is interesting to raise a question at this initial stage as to what proof the *Gītā* offers for the existence of God. From the stand point of Rāmānuja the question would indeed be ridiculous. The *Brahma-sūtra* may discuss the proofs for the reality of *Brahman*. But the *Gītā* for Rāmānuja is a revelation by God Himself to Arjuna and while the highest Deity presents itself to vision and speaks forth the saving knowledge the demand for a proof of its being cannot arise in the mind of Arjuna. When God reveals Himself to man, He has not got to propound proofs for His existence. A human teacher or a human theistic treatise may engage in the task of advancing the required proof. The self-revealing God imparting spiritual wisdom has furnished all the proof, nay, the best proof, by the very fact of that self-revelation. Further proof and that an infinitely expanded proof is offered in the presentation of the

Viśvarūpa. That brings about the actual perception of the Infinite. All that is required for the attainment of the vision is symbolized by दिव्यं चक्षुः which Śrī Kṛṣṇa graciously confers on Arjuna. That gift really means the fitness for the experience of God and the fitness is brought about by *bhakti.* There is a significant epithet of *bhakti*: प्रत्यक्षावगमम्. Rāmānuja explains it in the following words: भक्तिरूपेणोपासनेनोपास्यमानोऽहं तदानीमेवोपासितुः प्रत्यक्षतामुपगतो भवामीत्यर्थः । (IX. 2.)
That an experience of God such as the one vouchsafed to Arjuna is veridical is to be established by two considerations :

(a) It must not be a mere reiteration of mundane knowledge. It should not be just an intensified recollection of what has been learnt in the course of antecedent experience by way of scriptural study or reasoning. Often such a wishful recollection may take on delusive vividness and the image may pose as a perceptual object. (b) The reality supposed to be apprehended should not be something wholly out of relation to the established facts of non-mystical experience. It must not be an alternative realm standing in contradiction to the world of mundane actuality. In that case instead of resolving contradictions, it would be generating a new contradiction. To be a genuine perception of reality an experience must be integrated in itself and must introduce integration into the otherwise incoherent empirical world. Its authenticity is to be measured by its coherent reconstruction of the uncoordinated multiplicities of every day experience.

Now Arjuna's vision of God satisfies this two-fold criterion of novelty and coherence. Śrī Kṛṣṇa asks him to behold in His cosmic form wonders not seen before.

बहून्यदृष्टपूर्वाणि पश्याश्चर्याणि भारत । (XI. 6.)

Rāmānuja explains the significant injuction :

इह जगति प्रत्यक्षदृष्टानि शास्त्रदृष्टानि च यानि वस्तूनि, तानि सर्वाण्यन्यान्यपि सर्वेषु लोकेषु सर्वेषु च शास्त्रेष्वदृष्टपूर्वाणि...

Such is the meaning of अदृष्टपूर्वं and thus the tremendous novelty of the experience is recorded. Similarly Arjuna is further enjoined to behold all the bewildering multiplicity of the world as located in that single all-encompassing form and as gathered at a single point in it.

इहैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं पश्याद्य सचराचरम् । (XI. 7.)

Arjuna is said to have had a vision of that integrating reality.

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।
अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥ (XI. 13.)

देवदेवस्य दिव्ये शरीरे अनेकधा प्रविभक्तं प्रकृतिपुरुषात्मकं कृत्स्नं जगत्; एकस्थमेकदेशस्थं; पाण्डवो भगवत्प्रसादलब्धतद्दर्शनानुगुणदिव्यचक्षुरपश्यत् ।

The infinite plurality of existents is unified into a coherent pattern and is shown as a factor in the immense vista of the divine Reality. There is novelty because the divine object transcends the customary world and there is coherence because that world is translated into being a factor in the infinite harmony of divine existence.

That God is the supreme Reality and that nothing higher is there or is conceivable is forcefully brought out in the statement: मत्तः परतरं नान्यत् किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय. There is nothing other than God, which surpasses Him.

मत्तोऽन्यत् मद्व्यतिरिक्तं ज्ञानबलादिगुणान्तरयोगि किंचिदपि परतरं नास्ति ।

The statement denies the philosophical position that posits a Reality transcending God and of which God Himself is supposed an appearance or phenomenal manifestation or even a limited and conditioned presentation. On Rāmānuja's interpretation, views such as those of Śaṅkara and Yādavaprakāśa stand rejected by this metaphysical exaltation of God. God is the highest

reality and not a phenomenal or conditioned version of a higher Absolute. The *akṣara* spoken of in the twelfth chapter is the same as the *kṣetrajña* of the thirteenth and, the fifteenth chapter definitively places *Puruṣottama* above the *akṣara*. Not merely is the *akṣara* surpassed, it itself constitutes a power of God, the *parā Prakṛti* wielded by Him.

यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः । (XV. 17.)

Puruṣottama is the inexhaustible *Īśvara* permeating and sustaining, the three worlds. The three worlds for Rāmānuja are the realm of matter, the realm of selves in *saṃsāra* and the realm of emancipated selves called the *akṣara*: लोक्यत इति लोकः, तत्त्रयम् लोकत्रयम्; अचेतनं तत्संसृष्टश्चेतनो मुक्तश्चेति प्रमाणावगम्यमेतत् त्रयम् ।

An impersonal Absolute above *Puruṣottama* in the scale of metaphysical eminence is not, according to Rāmānuja, propounded or even implied in the *Gītā*. He is Brahman that is *param*. The metaphysical nature of Brahman is not conceived as excluding determination by attributes. Arjuna puts together what he has learnt about Kṛṣṇa and acknowledges its ultimate truth:

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।
पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥
आहुस्त्वामृषयस्सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा ।
असितो देवलो व्यासस्स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥
सर्वमेतदृतं मन्ये यन्मां वदसि केशव । (X. 12-14.)

The *Gītā* frequently names Kṛṣṇa as *Yogeśvara* and Rāmānuja understands by *yoga* in this context the wealth of divine attributes.

Commenting on

एतां विभूतिं योगं च मम यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
सोऽविकम्पेन योगेन युज्यते नात्र संशयः ॥ (X. 7.)

he interprets मम योगं as मम हेयप्रत्यनीककल्याणगुणगणरूपं योगम्। This is the significance attached to all the attributions of *yoga* to Kṛṣṇa. The view that Brahman, which is *nirguṇa*, becomes *saguṇa*, out of compassion to the dull-witted is an aberration of Advaita; for the *nirguṇa* Brahman cannot possibly harbour the attribute of compassion. Even so, the theory of *avatāra* if taken as true imports into the nature of the deity countless attributes implied in that compassionate self-disclosure. Elimination of the wicked is a minor incident of *avatāra*, contends Rāmānuja, and the paramount purpose is the saving of the devout. This साधु-परित्राण on Rāmānuja's interpretation consists of the self-revelation of God to the seekers. Those that seek God should not be without Him. The attributes productive of such dynamism of self-disclosure are surely constitutive of the very essence of Divinity. While the metaphysical attributes such as self-existence, consciousness, joy, purity and infinity are taken for granted, the *Gītā* unlike the Upaniṣads, takes particular care to dwell on the love and compassion of God. The Lord of the *Viśvarūpa* dimension has the sun and moon as His eyes. Rāmānuja says that the sun represents the unapproachable grandeur प्रताप of the Lord, while the moon symbolizes the grace प्रसाद. The latter aspect of the deity is beautifully brought out in the following :

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुस्साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत्। (IX. 18.)

As a whole this love-aspect of the deity pervades the entire text.

God's relation to the cosmos of unthinking matter and the finite souls alive with the eternal light of consciousness is conveyed by the concepts of विभूति, मदीया प्रकृति and अंश. That cosmos forms an inseparable adjective of God. This relation of the finite realm to God is so organic and that realm is embedded in Him so wholly and unconditionally that we can say that He is all that cxists.

सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः। (XI. 40.) exclaims Arjuna in the height of his ecstatic vision. Rāmānuja explains :

सर्वमात्मतया समाप्नोषि, ततस्सर्वोऽसि यतस्त्वं सर्वं चिदचिद्वस्तुजातमात्मतया समाप्नोषि, अत: सर्वस्य चिदचिद्वस्तुजातस्य त्वच्छरीरतया त्वत्प्रकारत्वात् सर्वप्रकार: त्वमेव सर्वशब्दवाच्योऽसीत्यर्थ: ।

Hence Arjuna invokes Him as सर्व. The manner in which the world belongs to God is no easy matter to comprehend.

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थित: ॥
न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावन: ॥ (IX. 4, 5.)

Rāmānuja interprets this enigmatic statement in the following words :

इदं चेतनाचेतनात्मकं कृत्स्नं जगत् । मया अन्तर्यामिणा । ततम् अस्य जगतो धारणार्थं नियमनार्थं च शेषित्वेन व्याप्तमित्यर्थ: । ततो मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि । सर्वाणि भूतानि मय्यन्तर्यामिणि स्थितानि । न चाहं तेष्ववस्थित: । अहं तु न तदायत्तस्थिति: । मत्स्थितौ तैर्न कश्चिदुपकार इत्यर्थ: । न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि । न घटादीनां जलादेरिव मम धारकत्वम् । कथम् ? मत्सङ्कल्पेन । पश्य ममैश्वरं योगम् । अन्यत्र कुत्राचिदसंभावनीयं मदसाधारणमाश्चर्यं योगं पश्य । कोऽसौ योग: ? भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावन: । सर्वेषां भूतानां भर्ताऽहम् । नैव तै:कश्चिदपि ममोपकार: । ममात्मैव भूतभावन: । मम मनोमयस्सङ्कल्प एव भूतानां भावयिता धारयिता नियन्ता च ।

God permeates all beings as their inner ruler. So naturally they abide in Him. He does not dwell in them in the sense of drawing His being from them, even as they draw their being from Him. The mutual indwelling in the sense of deriving sustenance mutually is countered here. That they dwell in Him and derive being from Him is not something that happens to be so and through any cause or causes other than His determination

to that effect. He wills their being and wills their derivation of their existence and operativeness from Him. This is creative immanence along with transcendent perfection and self-sufficiency and it is immanence by inward choice and no external necessity. Much thought at once subtle, far reaching and profound is packed into these enigmatic verses of the *Gitā* and Rāmānuja offers effective direction for elucidation.

V

That the principal goal and purpose of life, the ultimate value, is the attainment of God is made emphatically clear in the *Gītā*. To refer to only one passage out of many that are equally good: यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम। Eternal life is life in God.

That this end has to be worked for with all the resources of life is a fundamental truth.

By *sādhana* is meant the planned effort towards the realization of the supreme goal, through an appropriate utilization of all the resources. The *Gītā* is the supreme classic on this theme. Rāmānuja while introducing the text affirms that the *sādhana* advocated by the *Gītā* is *bhakti-yoga*: 'भक्तियोगमवतारयामास'.

Bhakti may be provisionally defined as intensely loving contemplation of God. But such love of God does not arise except at a high level of spiritual purity. Rāmānuja understands Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be saying in the 12th chapter: मत्प्रियत्वेन मदेकप्राप्यताबुद्धिर्हि प्रक्षीणाशेषपापस्यैव जायते।

Only when the seeker understands his own nature thoroughly and realizes that it is such that complete self-fulfilment for him lies only in God-realization, he can have love of God. That level of self-knowledge is to be attained through what is called *jñāna-yoga*. This *jñāna-yoga* itself, understood as intellectual self-culture motivated by desire for self-knowledge can be practised only by a soul freed from the taint of worldly values.

This level of purity supplying the requisite basis for *jñāna-yoga* is to be attained by what is called *karma-yoga*. Hence Rāmānuja says that the *Gītā* promulgates *bhakti-yoga* which is ज्ञानकर्मानुगृहीत. He lays down the entire procedure in the following clear terms :

अनभिसंहितफलेन मदाराधनरूपेणानुष्ठितेन कर्मणा सिद्धेनात्मध्यानेन निवृत्ताविद्यादिसर्वतिरोधाने मच्छेषतैकस्वरूपे प्रत्यगात्मनि साक्षात्कृते सति मयि परा भक्तिः स्वयमेवोत्पद्यते ।

It is necessary to go into this comprehensive plan in some detail. It may be noted at once that the *bhakti* under question is neither an alternative to *jñāna* and *karma* nor instrumental to *jñāna* and *karma* but the very fruition of *jñāna* and *karma*.

VI

There is not much dispute as to the insistence on *karma-yoga* by the *Gītā*. Rāmānuja subscribes to this common finding. But he discerns certain features in it not so universally noted.

As a basis for *karma-yoga* there should be a clear intellectual apprehension of the nature of the individual self. This is the *sāṃkhya-yoga* mentioned in the second chapter. This again is the *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ* as it forms a clear discriminative knowledge of the self. *Karma* to be *karma-yoga* must embody in itself a three-fold renunciation. It must involve the conception that the self engaged in action is just an instrument of God. The action being performed must not be looked upon as the action belonging to the agent but as action pertaining or belonging to God. The work is God's work. The fruit of the action must be dedicated to God. This is renunciation of doership of work and the fruits thereof. The conception actuating work is to be of this description :

स्वकीयेनात्मना कर्त्रा स्वकीयैश्चोपकरणैस्स्वाराधनैकप्रयोजनाय
परमपुरुषस्सर्वशेषी सर्वेश्वरः स्वयमेव स्वकर्माणि कारयति । (III. 30.)

As a matter of fact *karma-yoga* of the right type is action from an outward point of view but in its inward essence it is *jñāna* itself. It involves a discriminative awareness of the self and also an awareness of God as permeating the entire situation of action. This is the significance of the famous passage :

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ (IV. 24.)

This fusion is what is intended by the puzzling declaration that a wise man sees *karma* in *akarma* and *akarma* in *karma*.

क्रियमाणमेव कर्मात्मयाथात्म्यानुसन्धानेन ज्ञानाकारं यः पश्येत्, तच्च ज्ञानं कर्मण्यन्तर्गततया कर्माकारं यः पश्येदित्युक्तं भवति। एवमात्मयाथात्म्यानुसन्धानगर्भं कर्म यः पश्येत्, स बुद्धिमान्। (IV. 18.)

Between the outward aspect of *karma* and inner aspect of *jñāna* the inner aspect is of greater value :

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञात् ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप । (IV. 33.)

As one progresses in *karma-yoga*, this inner aspect progressively develops and finally matures into *jñāna-yoga* which forms the consummation of *karma-yoga*.

The *Gītā* meets the question of the relative superiority of *karma* and *yoga* twice, in the 3rd and 5th chapters. The answer of Śrī Kṛṣṇa according to Rāmānuja is clear and decisive. Some are not fit for *jñāna-yoga*. For them *karma-yoga* is easy, natural and carries no risk. Even those who are fit for *jñāna-yoga*, have to practise some *karma* of the nature of sacrifice for meeting the necessities of life. Those who are spiritually advanced and are such that by observing their conduct lesser men model their own lives on that pattern are to practise *karma* as a matter of *loka-saṅgraha*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa cites His own life as an illustration of this principle. If the distinguished abandon *karma-yoga* as they no longer need it and if those who still need it follow their example and give it up, the former suffer a retributive lapse in their spiritual condition.

लोकरक्षार्थं शिष्टतया प्रथितेन श्रेष्ठेन स्ववर्णाश्रमोचितं कर्म सकलं सर्वदाऽनुष्ठेयम्; अन्यथा लोकनाशजनितं पापं ज्ञानयोगादप्येनं प्रच्यावयेत्।
(III. 21.)

The *Gitā* does not confine itself to a narrow ritualistic notion of *karma* but expounds the principle of *karma* so as to comprehend all moods of activity.

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत्।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम्॥ (IX. 27.)

Within *karma* Rāmānuja includes लौकिक, वैदिक, नित्य and नैमित्तिक. Rāmānuja sees *karma-yoga* to be the initial phase of *bhakti-yoga* itself and hence the magnificent description of the *bhakta* found in the 12th chapter is taken by him to apply to the *karma-yogin.*

VII

Perfection in *karma-yoga* results in *jñāna-yoga*. By *jñāna-yoga* Rāmānuja understands not the intellectual approach to God but a life of meditation on the intrinsic nature of the individual self, with a view to gaining an immediate and intuitive realization of its fundamental essence and characteristics.

It is the seeker established in this life that is called the *sthita-prajña* and again it is his basic qualities that are enumerated in the 13th chapter. He, again, it is that is described as the *jijñāsu* in the 7th chapter. In him the conception of the Ātman acquired as the precondition of *karma-yoga*, which again continues to form an inner element in *karma-yoga*, itself fructifies into a contemplative seeking of it. The *sthita-prajña* passes through four ascending levels according to Rāmānuja. He, first of all, withdraws the senses from their respective objects even as the tortoise draws its limbs within its shell. Then he attends to the purification of the mind from desires for other ends. In the third stage he makes the purified mind dwell repeatedly on the glories of the self. Lastly he gets established in the blissful aware-

ness of the self, which naturally marks the cessation of all other worldly desires. From the last stage there is the transition to the final intuition of the self. The speciality in Rāmānuja's handling of the theme of *jñāna-yoga* is that, though it is directed towards the individual self and immediacy of direct vision, it includes an essential element of devotion to God. The purification that is necessary for it is procurable only through such devotion. This truth is conveyed, according to Rāmānuja, in the declaration of the *Gītā*: तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः। (II. 61.)

He says:

मनसि मद्विषये सति निर्दग्धाशेषकल्मषतया निर्मलीकृतं विषयानुरागरहितं मन इन्द्रियाणि स्ववशानि करोति। ततो वश्येन्द्रियं मन आत्मदर्शनाय प्रभवति।

It is for this reason that the *jijñāsu* of the 7th chapter is given to practice of *bhakti*. The idea is reinforced again in the 13th chapter by including मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी (XIII. 10.) among the requisites of *jñāna-yoga*. It is to be remarked that for Rāmānuja the principal subject - matter of *jñāna* in this stage is the '*pratyagātman*' and not '*paramātman*' and the *bhakti* that is practised is instrumental to self-realization. But its indispensability is beyond question. If the *jñānin* foolishly relies on his own power for the needed self-purification, he lands in disaster. The verses depicting the disaster ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः etc. up to बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति (II. 62, 63) signify for Rāmānuja, the spiritual degradations that befall a *jñānin* bereft of *bhakti*, even as *karma-yoga* may be viewed in the larger perspective as the first phase of *bhakti*, the *jñāna-yoga* too is a stage of *bhakti*, the next one, for it too includes *bhakti* and the self-knowledge it seeks is destined to lead up to ultimate *bhakti*.

VIII

The conclusion of the 5th chapter and the whole of the 6th chapter of the *Gītā* are devoted, according to Rāmānuja, to the exposition of *yoga*. *Yoga*, in this context, means what it means conventionally in Indian philosophical culture. For Rāmānuja

it means *ātmāvalokana*, the inward perception of the self. Such a perception is both 'self-knowledge', and 'self-becoming' for it inaugurates the life of the self in its authentic self-hood. The self consists of *jñāna*, it comes to be known through the efficacy of *jñāna-yoga* and the outcome of that *jñāna* is the emergent exercise of self-hood by way of unimpeded and expansive knowledge. Rāmānuja is clear that this 'self-intuition' differs from *jñāna-yoga* in being immediate and direct while *jñāna-yoga* is just a meditative approach to it and that this is an absolute necessity for the emergence of *bhakti*. *Jñāna-yoga* is not absolutely necessary, for the possibility is conceded that *karma-yoga* itself by an intensification of its inner aspect can directly bring about *ātmāvalokana*, without the mediation of *jñāna-yoga*. But *yoga* as *ātmāvalokana* is an indispensable step in spiritual progress. Rāmānuja's treatment of it in the course of his elucidation of the relevant portion of the *Gītā* contains some cardinal tenets.

1. While the principal theme to be apprehended by *yoga* is the self in its distinctive nature, for the acquisition of that high insight, devoted meditation on God is a necessary means.

2. There are four ascending stages in the intuition of the self as there are four ascending stages in the life of the *sthita-prajña*.

a) The *yogin* apprehends the essential self and all individual selves as being fundamentally alike in nature.

b) He notes the basic likeness of the individual self to the divine self, in respect of purity and holiness. Thus while apprehending the pure self, he apprehends the divine self also. The pure self is such that carries intimations of the supreme self.

c) This ecstatic intuition of the self and its likeness to all selves and even to God Himself from the standpoint of purity, enters the normal plane of consciousness also and transmutes it to its own likeness. The high achievement of *yoga* in the movement of mystic apprehension does not remain an isolated experience at the high altitude, but over-flows to the post-yogic normal life and floods it, as it were, and transforms it into a continuance of itself.

d) In this new mode of life transcendence of the normal values takes place. The petty joys and depressions of the unregenerate mundane life lose their power over the seeker and he gets established in perpetual peace. The height of yogic experience has the effect of heightening the totality of life and works the miracle of a complete sublimation.

3. What does a *yogin* actually intuit the self as being, in his utmost height of perception? He intuits it as transcending the body. He intuits it as of the nature of consciousness or knowledge. It is intelligence in its original nature. He intuits further and this is of capital importnce to Rāmānuja, that the self belongs to God as it dwells in Him, is under His control and is a means to Him. This is the greatest discovery. Being convinced of this nature of the self, he realizes as a result of this indubitable intuition, that his self is such that it can reach the cosummation of its being in nothing other than the realization of God. Such a realization marks the beginning of ultimate *bhakti*. The whole march of *sādhana* upto this stage of the origination of *bhakti* is beautifully and most clearly delineated in the following sentence :

ततोऽनभिसंहितफलेन मदाराधनरूपेणानुष्ठितेन कर्मणा सिद्धेनात्मध्यानेन निवृत्ताविद्यादिसर्वतिरोधाने मच्छेषतैकस्वरूपे प्रत्यगात्मनि साक्षात्कृते सति मयि परा भक्तिः स्वयमेवोत्पद्यते ।

IX

Even as Arjuna raises the question twice as to which of the two *yogas*, *karma* and *jñāna*, is superior to the other, he raises the question with regard to the relative status of the *yoga* of *jñāna* and that of *bhakti* in the 12th chapter. Rāmānuja restricts the scope of the question as pertaining to only the ease of performance and speed of fructification. He points out that the highest place has already been accorded to *bhakti* from the standpoint of intrinsic and objective worth in the conclusion of the sixth chapter. There it is said :

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान्भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥ (VI. 47.)

Hence the position of *bhakti* as the highest phase of *sādhana* is indisputably laid down in the *Gītā* according to Rāmānuja. The question of the twelfth chapter is appropriately answered. While *bhakti* is the real and highest *sādhana*, it is also an easier and speedier means for one in whom love of God has already dawned, and for the love-less spiritual aspirant *jñāna-yoga* or even *karma-yoga* has to be recommended as easier and speedier. It is necessary to discriminate among the possible forms of *bhakti*. There is the lowest type in which devotion to God is practised for purposes of securing material values. The devotion to God for attaining to self-knowledge is higher than this. These two are forms of instrumental devotion and they are not love of God for His own sake. Hence they are not forms of exclusive love. They also pass away when the ends sought are attained. The third type of devotion is love of God for attaining Him. He constitutes the end. Hence it is exclusive and enduring. Śrī Kṛṣṇa praises all the three types of devotees as 'generous' and Ramānuja interprets the term of praise to signify that the opportunity they offer for the bestowal of grace makes them benefactors to Him. The urge to be gracious and bountiful is so great in God. His eagerness for redemptive self-manifestation is so intense. But the third type of devotion is the highest and rarest. Its characteristic feature is that it springs from the knowledge of God and it is search for God as all in all. The *bhakti* embodies the thought 'वासुदेवस्सर्वम्'. Rāmānuja explains it to mean: वासुदेव एव मम परमप्राप्यं प्रापकं च। अन्यदपि यन्मनोरथवर्ति स एव मम तत् सर्वमिति।

Such a devotion is open to all. This is a special point and in the interpretation of it Rāmānuja appears definitely to be rejecting the contention of the *apaśūdrādhikaraṇa* of the *Brahmasūtra*.

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम्॥ (IX. 29.)

The interpretation of the verse runs as follows:

जातितश्चाकारतस्स्वभावतो ज्ञानतश्चात्यन्तोत्कृष्टापकृष्टरूपेण वर्तमानेषु सर्वेषु भूतेषु समाश्रयणीयत्वे समोऽहम्। अयं जात्याकारस्वभावज्ञानादिभिर्निकृष्ट

इति समाश्रयणे न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति। तथा समाश्रितत्वातिरेकेण जात्यादिभि-रत्यन्तोत्कृष्टोऽयमिति समाश्रयणे न कश्चित् प्रियोऽस्ति।

Bhakti of this supreme level of excellence is the ultimate means for the attainment of God. This attainment is in three levels. They are the intellectual understanding of God, the direct intuitive experience of God and eternal communion with Him. The *Gītā* emphatically declares that *bhakti* is the one unfailing and sufficient means for all the three levels of attainment.

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप॥ (XI. 54.)

Rāmānuja has not got to establish the supremacy of *bhakti* as the means for God-realization. It is set down here clearly and is repeated in the eighteenth chapter also. He transcribes the message of *bhakti* in simple words: अनन्यया तु भक्त्या तत्त्वतश्शास्त्रैर्ज्ञातुं, तत्त्वतस्साक्षात्कर्तुं, तत्त्वतः प्रवेष्टुं च शक्यः।

The defining essence of *bhakti* is enunciated, according to Rāmānuja, in one line which occurs significantly enough twice in the *Gītā* and that at the grand conclusions of the chapters nine and eighteen.

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु। (IX. 34, XVIII. 65.)

The elucidation of the four central expressions must be presented.

मन्मना भव। मयि तैलधारावदविच्छेदेन निविष्टमना भव।
मद्भक्तः। अत्यर्थमत्प्रियत्वेन युक्तो मन्मना भव।
मद्याजी। अनवधिकातिशयप्रियमदनुभवकारितमद्यजनपरो भव।
मां नमस्कुरु। अनवधिकातिशयप्रियमदनुभावकारितात्यर्थ-
प्रियाशेषशेषवृत्तावपर्यवस्यन् मय्यन्तरात्मन्यतिमात्रप्रह्वीभावव्यवसायं कुरु।

bhakti is contemplation and that contemplation saturated with indescribable love. It is loving contemplation that issues in complete service. It is loving contemplation that is not content with the actual service rendered and therefore culminates in humble surrender. So *bhakti* in its fullness is constituted by contemplation filled with love and it expresses itself in service and surrender. It is at once thought, love, worship and dedication of self. One essential mark of this supreme *bhakti* Rāmānuja takes care to mention again and again (eleven times). It is the intense consciousness of the impossibility of supporting one's life without such a practice of the presence of God. A few instances of his statement of this characteristic may be adduced.

'मत्प्रियत्वातिरेकेणानन्यसाधारणस्वभावतया मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना' ; (VI. 47.)
'अयं मया विना आत्मधारणासंभावनया मामेवानुत्तमं प्राप्यमास्थित:' ; (VII. 18.)
'अत्यर्थमत्प्रियत्वेन मत्स्मृत्या विना आत्मधारणमलभमान:' ; (XI. 55.)
'मत्प्रियत्वातिरेकेण मद्भजनेन विना मनसश्चात्मनश्च बाह्यकरणानां च धारण-मलभमाना मद्भजनैकप्रयोजना भजन्ते ; (IX. 13.)
मद्गतप्राणा:— मद्गतजीविता: , मया विना आत्मधारणमलभमाना इत्यर्थ: ।' (X. 9.)

This means that to the supreme devotee life becomes insupportable without *bhakti*. *Bhakti* becomes the absolute and sole necessity for his very existence. There are pleasures which when actualized subtract from life. There are values with whose attainment as well as non-attainment life is perfectly compatible. But the *bhakti* that is spoken of here is such that it constitutes the sole foundation of the life and existence of the *bhakta*. Even as the finite self and the world of nature have God as their sole support, sovereign and end from the metaphysical standpoint, to the perfect devotee, devotion to God becomes the basis, guiding principle and supreme goal of his existence. This is axiological अपृथक्सिद्धि. He truly 'is' when filled with love of God and experiences himself as perishing into utter nothingness when he lacks it. It is to such people that Śrī Kṛṣṇa applies the term मत्परायण and मद्गतप्राण according to Rāmānuja.

X

There is another factor integral to *bhakti* which, for Rāmānuja, is a fundamental part of the message of the *Gitā*. This is what is named *prapatti* in devotional tradition. It signifies *śaraṇāgati* or self-surrender. That the *Gitā* abounds in the teaching of this way to God can hardly be questioned. In the first place the whole discourse of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is for the resurrection of the spirit of Arjuna, who is a '*prapanna*'. The veil of *Māyā*, says, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, can be rent asunder through only *prapatti*. The shackles of the *guṇas* can be snapped only by *prapatti*. *Puruṣottama* can be approached only by way of *prapatti*. While summing up the substance of the entire discourse Śrī Kṛṣṇa places on record the final injunction.

ईश्वरस्सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्त्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥
तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ (XVIII. 61, 62.)

Even in the statement of the essence of *bhakti*, मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु the last constituent signified by मां नमस्कुरु is undoubtedly *prapatti*. The culminating unit of teaching is the exhortation to surrender.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ (XVIII. 66.)

No wonder Rāmānuja affirms the all-important role of *prapatti*. It should be added emphatically that no other commentator fails to do so. The speciality in Rāmānuja's account lies in the clear grasp of the significance of the technic of *śaraṇāgati* and a thorough elucidation of the various levels and modes of its efficacy. *Prapatti* is what could generate *bhakti* when the devotee is depressed for want of it. When made part of *bhakti* it confers on it completeness and renders it fully effective. In otherwise hopeless cases, it can be used as a complete substitute for

bhakti. The entire meaning of *prapatti* lies in a prayerful and humble transfer of one's spiritual responsibilities to God and make Him function in the abundance of His grace as the *sādhana* for man's attainment of Him. Rāmānuja expresses the last type of *prapatti* in the following matchless words:

परमपुरुषं भगवन्तं नारायणं स्वामित्वेन सुहृत्त्वेन गुरुत्वेन च परिगृह्य, ऐकान्तिकात्यन्तिकतत्पादाम्बुजद्वयपरिचर्यैकमनोरथः तत्प्राप्तये च तत्पादाम्बुज-द्वयप्रपत्तेरन्यन्न मे कल्पकोटिसहस्रेणापि साधनमस्तीति मन्वानः, तस्यैव भगवतो नारायणस्य चरणारविन्दयुगलमनन्यात्मसंजीवनेन तद्गतसर्वभावेन शरणमनुव्रजेत् ।

K.T. PANDURANGI

CENTRAL TEACHING OF THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ ACCORDING TO ŚRĪ MADHVĀCĀRYA

In this paper it is proposed to outline the central teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* according to Śrī Madhva's interpretation. Śrī Madhva has written two commentaries on the *Bhagavadgītā*: the *Gītābhāṣya* and the *Gītātātparya*. His *Gītābhāṣya* unlike the *Bhāṣyas* of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja is not elaborate. He comments on only such verses which are philosophically important and which were not correctly or adequately explained by his predecessors. He interprets these verses in the context of the topic of the chapter as well as the central teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā*. While interpreting individual verses, he gives particular attention to its relevance to the total purport or *mahātātparya* of the text. He fully utilises the method of *upakrama*, *upasaṃhāra* etc. He quotes a vast mass of authorities and literature in support of his interpretation. His *Gītātātparya* is a companion volume to the *Gītābhāṣya*, It supplements the interpretations of the *Bhāṣya* with additional arguments, authorities and discussions. In the introductory portion of this work the central teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* is enunciated and the relevance of all other topics discussed in the *Bhagavadgītā* to this central teaching is brought out. It will not be possible to make even a cursory survey of the problems discussed in these two works in this small paper. Therefore, it is proposed to deal with only those aspects of Śrī Madhva's interpretations which constitute his distinct contribution to the interpretation of the *Bhagavadgītā* and which bring out the central teaching according to his *Bhāṣya*.

II

Let me first state the central teaching in Śrī Madhva's own words.

तत्र....उत्तमाधिकारिणमात्मनः प्रियतममर्जुनं, क्षत्रियाणां विशेषतोऽपि परमधर्मं नारायणद्विट्तदनुबन्धिनिग्रहं बन्धुस्नेहादधर्मत्वेनाशङ्क्य ततो निवृत्तप्रायं, स्वविहितवृत्त्या भक्त्या भगवदाराधनमेव परमो धर्मः तद्विरुद्धः सर्वोऽप्यधर्मः भगवदधीनत्वात् सर्वस्येति बोधयति भगवान्नारायणः ।

This Statement of central teaching makes the following points clear.

1. Arjuna is उत्तमाधिकारिन् (not a मन्दाधिकारिन् as contended by Śaṅkara.)
2. The issue involved here is not a narrow issue of killing Kauravas or their supporters but those who are opposed to *dharma* and God.
3. Arjuna is labouring under the impression that killing these people is *adharma*.
4. He is confusing between *dharma* and *adharma* on account of his attachment to his kith and kin, and therefore, proposes to shirk his duty.
5. Performance of one's own duty in dedication to God with devotion is *dharma*.
6. Shirking one's own duty or trying to perform a duty which is not one's own, or performing one's own duty without a sense of dedication and devotion is *adharma*.
7. Everything is entirely dependent upon God.
8. Arjuna being a *kṣatriya* it is especially his duty to destroy those who are opposed to *dharma* and God.

Of these eight points let us first consider the fifth point which is the centre of all other points, *viz*. स्वविहितवृत्त्या भक्त्या भगवदाराधनमेव परमो धर्मः. It should be noted that स्वविहितवृत्ति, भक्ति and भगवदाराधन together constitute *dharma* not merely

either स्वविहितवृत्ति or भक्ति. न भक्त्यादिकं प्रत्येकं परमो धर्मः किन्तु मिलितमेव. Therefore, if Arjuna retreats from his duty of fighting those who are opposed to *dharma* and God, and practises devotion to God he will not have discharged his *dharma*. Similarly if he fights without realising that he is भगवदधीन and without dedication then also he will not have discharged his *dharma*. Therefore, a combination of these is insisted upon in the *Gītā*. This is made clear in the following passages :

1. स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः । (XVIII. 46.)
2. श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मो भयावहः । (III. 35.)
3. अथ चेत् त्वमिमं धर्म्यं सङ्ग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
   ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि । (II. 33.)

It is स्वविहितवृत्ति or स्वधर्म that must be performed, not merely धर्म or विहितवृत्ति. What is विहितवृत्ति or धर्म for one may not be the same for another. It is this स्वविहितवृत्त्या भक्त्या भगवदाराधनम् that is *karmayoga* according to Madhvācārya.

III

This *karmayoga* has four aspects and therefore is termed as कर्मचतुरङ्ग by Jayatīrtha. These are: 1. विहितकर्मानुष्ठानम् 2. श्रवणादिद्वारा परमात्मज्ञानम् 3. संन्यासः 4. त्यागः. The first one *viz*. विहितकर्मानुष्ठानम् has two aspects i.e., वर्णाश्रमधर्म and साधारणधर्म. The *varṇāśramadharmas* are prescribed in the Dharmaśāstras. The *sādhāraṇadharmas* such as *dāna*, *paropakāra*, *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, etc., are well-known. The second i.e., श्रवणादिद्वारा परमात्मज्ञानम् consists of the knowledge of God as निर्दोष, निखिलगुणपूर्ण, सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्र and सर्वोत्तम etc., and also the knowledge that *prakṛti*, *jīva*, etc., are entirely dependent upon God.

1. मत्तः परतरं नान्यत् किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय । (VII. 7.)
2. उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः । (XV. 17.)
3. अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः । (XV. 18.)
4. यो मामजमनादिं च वेत्ति लोकमहेश्वरम् । (X. 3.)
5. न मे विदुः सुरगणाः प्रभवं न महर्षयः । (X. 2.)

A large number of passages bring out the सर्वोत्तमत्व, पूर्णत्व, निर्दोषत्व and other aspects of God.

1. अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवः मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते । (X. 8.)
2. मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव । (VII. 7.)
3. मया ततमिदं सर्वं (IX. 4.) etc., point out the fact that प्रकृति, and जीव are entirly dependent upon God.

1. मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः । (IX. 4.)
2. भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थः (IX. 5.) etc., bring out स्वतन्त्रत्व aspect of God.

The third aspect of *karmacaturaṅga* is *sannyāsa*. The *sannyāsa* of the *Bhagavadgītā* is neither *yatyāśrama* in the formal sense nor *karmaparityāga*. It is *saṁkalpasannyāsa or* renunciation of motives. This is brought out by the expression मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूः (II.47.). The expression कर्मफलहेतुः is explained by Jayatīrtha as कर्मफलं हेतुः यस्य सः मा भूः । Do not make fruits of your actions your motives for doing them. (Let not the fruits of actions be thy motives). This explanation hits the point more correctly than the other two explanations, i.e., कर्मफलस्य हेतुः मा भूः and कर्मफलयोः हेतुः मा भूः given by other Bhāṣyakāras. The fourth aspect is त्याग which means सर्वकर्मफलस्य भगवति समर्पणम्. This is stated in the verse सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः । (XVIII. 2.).

Of these four aspects of *karmayoga* the first two i.e., विहितकर्मानुष्ठानम् and श्रवणादिद्वारा परमात्मज्ञानम् are actual activities while the last two i.e., संन्यास and त्याग relate to the perspective to be adopted in performing *karma*. With this perspective the *karmayoga* is no longer *pravṛttimārga*. Only the actions with motives constitute *prvṛttimārga*. When the motive is eliminated it is *nivṛttimārga*.

निष्कामं ज्ञानपूर्वं तु निवृत्तमिह चोच्यते. Thus Madhva invests a new meaning into the concept of *nivṛttimārga*. *Nivṛttimārga* is not total abandonment of activity but abandonment of motives. This is made clear in the *Gitā* in the verse

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥ (XVIII. 6.)

In view of the above, the question raised in

ज्यायसी चेत् कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत् किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ (III. 1.)

is not a choice between *karma* and *jñāna* much less a preference for *jñāna* repudiating *karma* but it is a question of choice between fighting and other activities which involve killing and in which motives such as winning the kingdom, cannot be easily eliminated, and *yatyāśrama* wherein there is no tinge of motives. Jayatīrtha puts the problem raised by Arjuna in this verse as follows :

रागादिप्रसक्तिहीनेषु शक्यानुष्ठानेषु यतिधर्मेषु सत्सु अशक्यानुष्ठाने युद्धे नियोजनमयुक्तम् ।

The answer given is, 'you being a *kṣatriya yatyāśrama* is not *svadharma* for you'. Sanaka and a selected few are eligible for *jñānayoga* while even Janaka followed the path of *karmayoga*. Even *jñānayoga* is not completely divorced of *karma*, nor *karmayoga* completely divorced of *jñāna*. The two expressions are explained as ज्ञानप्रचुरो योगः ज्ञानयोगः and कर्मप्रचुरो योगः कर्मयोगः.

Srī Madhva has enlarged the scope of *karmayoga* so as to include *śravaṇa*, *manana*, etc., the first stage of *jñāna* (*parokṣa-jñāna*) into it and also has included correct perspective as a part of *karmayoga*. He does not accept the contention that *karma* is opposed to *jñāna*, nor does he subscribe to ज्ञानकर्मसमुच्चयवाद. Neither in the stanza यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यात् nor in the stanza ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां total abandonment of *karma* is intended. The former relates to released souls while the latter refers to merely बाह्यकर्मसंकोच. Performance of *karma* both before and after release is helpful. Before release it assists *antaḥkaraṇa-śuddhi* and *jñāna*, and after release *ānandotkarṣa*. The nature of *karma* to be performed at different stages may differ but *karma* as such is not to be dispensed with at any stage.

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् । (III. 5.)

IV

Srī Madhva assigns a unique place to *bhakti* in the scheme of *sādhanas*. He mentions various stages of *bhakti* as पक्वभक्ति, परिपक्वभक्ति and अतिपरिपक्वभक्ति.

The role of these stages of *bhakti* is explained in the *Gītā-tātparya* as follows.

भक्त्या प्रसन्नो भगवान् दद्याज्ज्ञानमनाकुलम् ।
भक्तिं च भूयसीं ताभ्यां प्रसन्नो दर्शनं व्रजेत् ॥
ततोऽपि भूयसीं भक्तिं दद्यात्ताभ्यां विमोचनम् ॥

This scheme is further explained by Jayatīrtha as follows.

1. अतिपरिपक्वभक्तियोग एव मोक्षसाधनं न भगवद्दृष्टिः ।
   सा तु तत्साधनत्वात् मोक्षसाधनमुच्यते ।
2. परिपक्वभक्तियोग एव दृष्टिसाधनं न तु ध्यानम् ।
   तत्तु तत्साधनमिति दृष्टिसाधनतया उच्यते ॥

3. पक्वो भक्तियोग एव ज्ञानसाधनं न तु श्रवणादि ।
तत्तु तत्साधनतया ज्ञानसाधनत्वेनोच्यते ।

Thus *parokṣajñāna, dhyāna* and *aparokṣajñāna* lead to greater and greater intensity of *bhakti* which ultimately leads to liberation. Even after liberation, *bhakti* is not to be dispensed with. Before liberation *bhakti* is *sādhana-bhakti,* while after liberation it is *sādhyarūpā.* This is made clear in the following:

मुक्तोऽपि तद्वशो नित्यं भूयो भक्तिसमन्वितः ।
साध्यानन्दस्वरूपैव भक्तिर्नैवात्र साधनम् ॥

According to Śrī Madhva *karma, jñāna* and *bhakti* are to continue even after liberation. *Bhakti* is defined by him as:

माहात्म्यज्ञानपूर्वस्तु सुदृढः सर्वतोऽधिकः स्नेहो भक्तिरिति प्रोक्तः ।

This is beautifully elaborated by Jayatīrtha as परमेश्वर-भक्तिर्नाम निरवधिकानन्तानवद्यकल्याणगुणत्वज्ञानपूर्वकः स्वात्मात्मीयसमस्त-वस्तुभ्योऽनन्तगुणाधिकः अन्तरायसहस्रेणाप्यप्रतिबद्धः निरन्तरप्रेमप्रवाहः ।

What is important in realising the *māhātmya* of God is to realise that all other things are entirely dependent upon him, he is free from defects and possesses all qualities.

सर्वस्य तदधीनत्वं सर्वसद्गुणपूर्णताम् । निर्दोषत्वं च विज्ञाय विष्णो-स्तत्राखिलाधिकः । स्नेहो भक्तिरिति प्रोक्तः सर्वोपायोत्तमोत्तमः ।

V

The elaboration of the central teaching of the *Bhagavad-gītā* as स्वविहितवृत्त्या भक्त्या भगवदाराधनमेव परमो धर्मः makes it clear that the discussion of all other topics such as *bhakti, jñāna, sarvottamatva* of God and the dependence of *prakṛti, jīva, etc.,* on God is very relevant to the elaboration of the central teaching of the *Gītā.* Jayatīrtha clarifies this point as follows :

1. युद्धादिकरणमेव बोधनीयं भगवन्महिमादिकं किमर्थमुच्यत इत्यतो बोध्यार्थमाह — स्वविहितेति। न केवलं युद्धादि स्वविहितमात्रं परमो धर्मः। येन तदेव बोध्यं स्यात्। अपि तु भक्त्यादि-कमपि। तत्रार्जुनस्य अधर्मशङ्कायामपि प्राप्तलोकोपकाराय समग्र-धर्मो भगवता बोध्यते।

2. तर्हि प्रकृत्यादिवर्णनं क्व उपयुज्यते.... सर्वस्य भगवदधीनत्वहेतुं वक्तुं सर्वनिरूपणम्।

Srī Madhva finds support for all the tenets of his system in the very exposition of this *Gītādharma*. In the verse

असत्यमप्रतिष्ठं ते जगदाहुरनीश्वरम्। (XVI.8.)

the theory of *jaganmithyātva* is rejected. The plurality of selves is clearly stated in

नत्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम्॥ (II.12.)

This was already pointed out by Rāmānuja as एवं भगवतः सर्वेश्वरादात्मनां परस्परं च भेदः पारमर्थिक इति भगवतैवोक्तं प्रतीयते. Madhva rejects the contention of Śaṅkara that देहभेदानुवृत्त्या बहुवचनम् नात्मभेदानुवृत्त्या, since what persists birth after birth is the soul and not the body. The view of some modern critics that 'we cannot draw any conclusion about the ultimate nature of the soul from an occassional singular or plural usage' is not quite justified, since Madhva points out a large number of plural usages with reference to the *jīva* throughout the *Gītā*.

1. अशोच्यानन्वशोचः (II.11.)
2. पुनर्जन्म.... नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः (VIII.15.)
3. मां ध्यायन्त उपासते (XII.6.)
4. ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां (XVIII.61.)

are only few instances that may be mentioned here.

According to Śrī Madhva plurality of selves persists even after liberation. Therefore, it is necessary to note his interpretation of the following passages.

1. ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति (II.72.)
2. ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा (V.21.)
3. ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति (V.24.)
4. ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते (XIV.26.)
5. यः प्रयाति स मद्भावम् । (VIII.5.)

Without losing oneself into hair-splitting grammatical explanations one may point out that Śrī Madhva explains these and similar other passages to signify the final resting of the soul in the supreme as indicated in the *Brahma sūtra* अस्मिन्नस्य च तद्योगं शास्ति or as mentioned in the *Gītā* itself:

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप (XI.54.)

Thus, not only he finds support for all his tenets in the *Gītā* but declares that the doctrines of *ātmaikya* and *jaganmithyātva* are repudiated in the *Gītā*.

VI

On a number of crucial verses Śri Madhva's interpretations are far better and could be adopted without clash of doctrines. We may notice one or two here.

The line गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः (II.11.) is ordinarily rendered as 'wise men do not grieve for the dead and the living'. However, Śrī Madhva takes च here in the sense of इव. In the *Mahābhārata* and in a few other places also च is used in the sense of इव. Nīlakaṇṭha the commentator on the *Mahābhārata* does assign this meaning to च (इवार्थे चः).

According to Śrī Madhva the import of the line is पण्डिताः अगतासूनिव गतासून् नानुशोचन्ति ।

Another instance of interpretational richness is in :

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निः यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ (III.38.)

Here the significance of giving three similies in respect of one and the same point कामेन आवृतः is beautifully brought out as follows :

1. यथा धूमेन अग्निः आवृतः प्रकाशरूपोऽपि न अन्येषां सम्यग् दर्शनाय तथा परमात्मा ।
2. यथा आदर्शो मलेनावृतः अन्याभिव्यक्तिहेतुः न भवति तथा अन्तःकरणं परमात्मादेः व्यक्तिहेतुर्न भवति कामेनावृतम् ।
3. यथा उल्बेनावृत्य बद्धो भवति गर्भः तथा कामेनावृतो जीवः ।

Thus, the three illustrations have reference to three types of आवरण operating in three different ways with reference to God, soul and *antaḥkaraṇa*.

From the above brief sketch it is clear that Śrī Madhva has enriched the interpretative literature on the *Gītā* by his distinct contribution both in respect of arriving at the central teaching of the *Gītā* and offering striking interpretations to many crucial stanzas.

T.K. GOPALASWAMY AIYENGAR

BHĀSKARA ON THE GĪTĀ

The *Bhagavadgītā* is a store house of philosophical thoughts and it is considered as one of the three *prasthānas* by the systematisers of all philosophical disciplines. The text of BG. is so synthetic in its character that every philosopher is attracted to comment upon it to corroborate the doctrines expounded by him in the other two *prasthānas*. By and by it rose to the status of an *Upaniṣat* and so every chapter bears the colophon *Bhagavadgītāsu Upaniṣatsu*. There have been more commentators on BG. than on the other two *prasthānas*. The reason is quite obvious that the text of BG. is more intelligible, lucid and unequivocal. Vedānta Deśika, a great exponent of the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy, furnishes a list of Bhāṣyakāras[1] on BG. and therein he makes mention of Yādavaprakāśa and Bhāskara, besides Śaṅkara. No work of Yādavaprakāśa is available except some of his views incorporated and refuted in the commentaries of Advaita, Dvaita, and Viśiṣṭādvaita classics. That Yādavaprakāśa wrote a *Bhāṣya* on BG. is borne testimony by Vedānta Deśika. Bhāskara is very well known as a *Bhedābheda-vādin* and as a staunch advocate of combination of *jñāna* and *karma* (*jñāna-karma-samuccaya*). As early as 1933, Dr. B.N.K. Sarma contributed a very valuable paper regarding the existence of the *Bhāṣya* by Bhāskara, by bringing to light several passages of the *Bhāṣya* as incorporated in the Dvaita works and also in Vācaspatimiśra's *Bhāmatī*[2]. Dr. Sarma also maintains that Śaṅkara and Bhāskara were contemporaries on the strength of a stanza incorporated in the Dvaita work, *Maṇimañjarī*, of 1330 A.D. Luckily, Bhāskara's *Bhāṣya* is now made available to us by the Benaras Sanskrit University[3] and the publication is of high value.

1. On BG., XVIII 66 : पिशाच - रन्तिदेव - गुप्त - शङ्कर - यादवप्रकाश - भास्कर - नारायणार्य - यज्ञस्वामि - प्रभृतिभिः...
2. I H Q., 1933, p. 668.
3. Edited by Dr. Subhadropadhyaya, 1964.

It is unfortunate that this *Bhāṣya* text covers only nine chapters at present and it is hoped that the research scholars, in India and abroad, will bring to light the other nine chapters soon. Dr. V. Raghavan, discusses at length the *Gītā Bhāṣyas* of both Śaṅkara and Bhāskara and draws the conclusion that "the *Bhagavad Gītā bhāṣya* of Śaṅkara is an authentic work of his and that Bhāskara wrote after Śaṅkara"[4].

Bhāskara wrote *Bhāṣyas* on the three *prasthānas*, on BS., Ch.U. and BG. He is a critic of Śaṅkara and a follower of the *tridaṇḍī* school of *Saṃnyāsins* as opposed to *ekadaṇḍins*[5]. He makes sarcastic mention of Śaṅkara and his followers as *ekaveṇavaḥ* in his *bhāṣyas* on BS. and BG.

Bhāskara wrote Bhāṣya on all the eighteen chapters of BG. as is evident from the quotations in the Dvaita works[6]. Further Abhinava Gupta in his *Gītārtha-saṃgraha* makes distinct mention of Bhāskara as *Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara* and states that he himself does not elaborate on a particular subject in the eighteenth chapter of BG, since it has already been discussed by Bhāskara and others.[7]

The edition of the *Bhāṣya* of Bhāskara on BG. contains several readings which sometimes agree with the readings of the Kashmir version. There are long lacunae and several verses are without any *bhāṣya* passages. Probably Bhāskara did not write any *bhāṣya* on these verses finding no important point to bring out. The variant readings of the *bhāṣya* text given under each page of the edition of the text evidence the corrupt readings in the manuscripts. Still many of the *bhāṣya* passages could have been punctuated properly especially in the case of quotations from other works and the criticisms offered thereon.[8]

4. *Festschrift für Erich F.auāallner, āien, 1968, P. 292.*
5. See BG. VIII. 4, VI. 1.
6. IHQ., 1933, p. 672.
7. On BG., XVIII. 2: अत्र चाध्याये यदवशिष्टमवलग्नं वक्तव्यमस्ति तत् प्राक्तनैरेव तत्रभवद्भट्टभास्करादिभि: वितत्य विसृष्टम् ।
8. For example : On BG., III. 3. त्रिदण्डोऽनाश्रमी should be त्रिदण्डोऽन्याश्रमी । On p 85 where the Udaṅka episode is referred to the reading is corrupt. See V. Raghavan, *Wiener zeitschrift*, XI. 1967; pp. 137–139.

With regard to the readings of BG. it is very interesting to show certain concrete instances. To some extent Kashmirian readings are followed; but this cannot be conclusive proof that Bhāskara was a Kashmirian. The very opening stanza is peculiar where we find a reading totally different from the popular reading. We are surprised to find that instead of

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

Bhāskara reads as :

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे सर्वक्षत्रसमागमे ।

The same reading is also found in the Rāmakaṇṭha's *Gītābhāṣya* and this was probably the reading current at the time of Bhāskara. Rāmakaṇṭha is in fact the follower of Bhāskara's theory of *jñānakarma samuccaya*, and therefore it may perhaps be that he followed Bhāskara's readings. A survey of the readings adopted by Bhāskara will reveal that Bhāskara accepted those readings as genuine and correct and justified their authenticity by his explanatory notes. He levels charges against some of the commentators who had adopted certain readings to suit the philosophical doctrines of their own. He makes rather sarcastic remarks about them[9]. In certain cases Bhāskara adopts readings without mention of any alternative. These readings are to be admitted as genuine and traditional according to Bhāskara. It is necessary to show a striking example which testifies to Bhāskara's recording of a stanza in the early portion of BG.

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ॥

It is not known to which version this reading belongs. Bhāskara does not make mention of any other reading in this respect which he does in other places to confirm the veracity of his reading.

9. On BG., II. 21 : यत् किंचिदेतदेवं तु पाठान्तरं कुर्वन्तोऽर्थान्तरं स्वमतिपरिकल्पितं वर्णयन्तः बह्वो व्याख्यातारोऽभियुक्ताश्च उच्यन्ते । उक्तं च – शीलदोषादगृह्णन्तं लोकमाकुलीकुर्वन्तीति वा । On III. 22 : वर्त एवेति केचित् पठन्ति । आत्मनेपदित्वाद् (वृत) धातोः । तेषामितिहासपुराणवत् गीतायाः पञ्चमवेदत्वात् छान्दसप्रयोगबाहुल्यात् आर्षपाठविनाशनमेव प्रसज्यते सर्वत्र पाठान्तरं कुर्वताम् ।

Vedānta Deśika elaborately discusses the above reading and justifies the same as a *pūrvapakṣa* on the strength of some such similar *Mahābhārata* stanzas[10]. This shows that Bhāskara's reading is discussed, though his name is not mentioned in that connection. Vedānta Deśika mentions also some stanzas as unknown to Rāmānuja but known to Yādavaprakāśa and his followers in the third chapter of the BG. Further Nārāyaṇārya's version of some more stanzas in the eleventh chapter are quoted as unknown to Ramānuja[11].

The *Gītā* stanza ईश्वर: सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति is read by Bhaskara as :

ईश्वर: सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशे वसतेऽर्जुन ।

It is also important to note that Rāmakaṇṭha reads the same stanza differently as हृद्येष वसतेऽर्जुन ।

Further the well-known stanza

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुण: परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेय: परधर्मो भयावह: ॥

is preserved by Bhāskara thus :

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मोऽधिगुण: परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेय: परधर्मोदयादपि ॥

Owing to the absence of any alternative reading suggested by Bhāskara, it is obvious that the above reading was current during his time. Bhāskara shows his keen interest in fixing the readings of the *Gītā* in the second and third chapters of the BG. so as to suit his doctrinal variations in certain contexts.

---

10. BG. I. 10: तस्मात् पाठभेदेन व्यवहितान्वयेन, वाक्यभेदेन, पदार्थभेदेन वा योजना स्यात् । तत्र भीमभीष्मशब्दयो: विपर्यासात् पाठभेद: ।

11. B.G. XI. 17: यादवप्रकाशीयैरिह केचित् पञ्च श्लोकान् पठन्तीति विलिख्य व्याख्यातम् । अत्र दिव्यानीत्यादय: श्लोका: नारायणार्यैरपि लिखिता: ।.... एते श्लोका: सन्ति न वेति देवो जानाति ।.... न च गीताशास्त्रस्य श्लोकसंख्या व्यासादिभिरुक्ता । अर्वाचीनास्तु अविश्वसनीया इति ।

BHĀSKARA'S PHILOSOPHY

Bhāskara's *Brahma-sūtra bhāṣya* furnishes much more in formation regarding his philosophy. The vital theory of *jñānakarma-samuccaya* is explained under the *sūtra Sarvāpekṣā ca yajñādiś·uteḥ aśvavat.* Bhāskara naturally finds his patent theory well nourished and nurtured in BG., where the role of *karma* and *jñāna* are comprehensively treated with special emphasis on the co-ordination of both of them. His metaphysical doctrine of *bhedābheda* finds only a subordinate place in the BG. According to Bhāskra, Reality is one and many (*abhinna* and *bhinna*). The one is conditioned and the uncaused cause, but the manifold is the absolute conditioned by the *upādhis* or delimiting adjuncts. The finite self is Brahman limited by the metaphysical and moral imperfections of *avidyā*, *karma*, and *kāma*. *Mukti* consists in removing the barriers of this region of *saṃsāra*, and becoming one with Brahman or attaining *ekībhāva*. Bhāskara accepts *upādhis* as *satya* and not *mithyā*. He is known therefore as *Satyopādhivādin.*

Bhāskara discusses at the very outset of his *Gītā-bhāṣya*, the factors related to *anubandha-catuṣṭaya* and ultimately brings out the importance of the *Mahābhārata*. He places Vyāsa on a par with the Vedic seers and justifies his grammatical inaccuracies on the basis of the argument that Pāṇini's grammar alone should not be taken as the standard. He places the *Mahābhārata* on a par with the Vedas and applies all the Vedic definitions to it to confirm its Vedic character.[13]

Bhāskara avails of the earliest opportunity to expound his doctrine of *bhedābheda* in the commentary on the stanza

नत्वेवाहं जातु नासम् ।

He propounds that all the *jīvas* are the *aṃśas* or fragments of Brahman and cites BG. ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः (XV. 7.) as an authority to confirm his doctrine.

13. On BG., I. 20 :
वेदाभेदं भारतस्यावलोक्य व्यासो वाक्यैरश्विनोः स्तोत्रमादौ ।
सम्यक् कृत्वा वैदिकैर्लक्षणोक्तीः भूयो भूयः स्वीकरिष्यत्यशेषाः ॥

He explains that the relationship between Brahman and *jīva* is one of difference cum non-difference analagous to fire and sparks. He also gives the analogy of the all pervasive ether, conditioned by the size of the jars to illustrate the relationship.[14] As a corollary, it can be drawn that the *jīvas* are neither absolutely different nor absolutely identical with God. Bhāskara defines his conception of *aṃśa* based on the principle of self-differentiation through *upādhi*[15]. Bhāskara meets the argument of an opponent who repudiates the theory of *aṃśatva* of the *jīvā* on the strength of the concept of the *anupraveśa* of the Lord into several bodies. He counters that such an assumption will involve *sarvamukti* or *sarvabandha* (release to all or bondage to all) when one among the *jīvas* is either released or bound[16]. He advances further that it is a very serious mistake to admit God to be enmeshed in the ills of *saṃsāra,* when several *Śrutis* declare that He is '*vijñānam ānandam, brahma*', He concludes that the *jīvas* related to Iśvara as his fragments (*iśvarāṃśāḥ*)[17] are differently conditioned in different bodies with varying experiences of pleasure and pain. On the basis of the example of ether, he further states that just as ether in the jar though smoky or dusty will not contaminate the ether in other jars, the experiences of the *jīvas* in several bodies will not affect in any way the individual experiences of other *jīvas* in other bodies[18]. Bhāskara supplements his discussion to establish the atomic and monadic nature of the *jivas* by citing the Upaniṣadic authority[19] which testifies to the ingress and egress of the subtle body or *liṅga śarīra* of the *jīvas* from and into several bodies. He holds that the atomicity of the *jīva* is the outcome of the conditionality of the absolute and that the *liṅga śarira* is subjected to expansion and contraction.[20]

---

14. तत्र स्वाभाविकोऽभेद: औपाधिकस्तु भेद इति । अग्निविष्फुलिङ्गवत् महाकाश-घटाकाशवद् जीवपरयोर्भेदाभेदौ ।
15. BS , II. iii. 43 : उपाध्यवच्छिन्नस्यानन्यभूतस्य वाचकोऽयमंशशब्द: ।
16. On BG., II. 13.
17. ibid. : तस्मादीश्वरांशा: प्रतिशरीरं भिन्ना जीवा अभ्युपेया: ।
18. ibid. : यथैकस्मिन् घटाकाशे रजोधूमादिभिर्वृते ।
    न सर्वे संप्रयुज्यन्ते तद्वज्जीवा: सुखादिभि: ॥
19. BS. II. iii. 20.
20. लिङ्गशरीरस्य च संकोचविकासधर्मिणोऽणुरूपत्वादौपाधिकमणुत्वं जीवस्य गीयते ।

BHĀSKARA AS A CRITIC

Bhāskara's criticisms are remarkable. He advances several arguments refuting the interpretation of several stanzas by others in support of their doctrine. He is ever cautious to interpret the passages involving *jñāna* and *karma* to justify his patent doctrine of *jñānakarma-samuccaya*. He is not weary of refuting the theory of total renunciation of all *karmas* (*sarva karma-parityāga* of Śaṅkara). We shall now cite some concrete instances to show how Bhāskara interprets certain verses interpreted by other schools to suit their own doctrine.

a). नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः । (II. 17.)

is generally claimed by several schools of thought. Bhāskara criticises in this connection the Vaiśeṣika first and then the Advaitins whom he names as *mayāvādins*.[21] The word *avatārya* mentioned in this connection by Bhāskara refers to the introductory part of Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* on this stanza. In the same context, Bhāskara makes a remark, perhaps, about Buddhists whom he sarcastically mentions as very great experts in the science of *pramāṇa*.[22] Ultimately, he concludes that the interpretation of others is wrong and endorses the view that the things correlated as *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* are both different and non-different.[23]

b). Bhāskara levels charges against those who maintain that meditation on Brahman is the purport of the stanza

अविनाशि तु तद् विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् । (BG., II. 18.).

Bhāskara justifies that the context refers only to the *jīva* of the form of *paramātman* in the original form and that the interpretation with reference to meditation which will be discussed only in the sixth chapter and not earlier is out of context here.[24]

---

21. अपरे तु मायावादिनोऽवतार्य वर्णयन्ति. Here Śaṅkara's commentary is referred to by the word अवतार्य । See V. Raghavan, *Festschrift für Erich Frauwallner*, p. 283.
22. एतदन्ये प्रमाणकुशलाः प्रत्याचक्षते ।
23. सामान्यविशेषात्मकं वस्तु भिन्नाभिन्नमिति स्थितम् ।
24. नह्यत्र परब्रह्मोपासनमकस्मात् प्रतिपाद्यते । . . . जीवस्वरूपमेवेदानीं वक्तव्यम् ।

c). Bhāskara assumes the role of an expert Mīmāṃsaka and applying the principles of *Mīmāṃsā Śāstra* refutes the interpretation of some opponents while commenting upon

न जायते म्रियते वा, etc. (II. 21.)

He refutes the reading नायं भूतो भविता वा न भूयः and instead has the reading नायं भूत्वा etc. Bhāskara holds that the change in reading is not consistent with the context. The commentators who change the reading mean to incorporate the sense of meditation on *Parabrahman* into the context. The opponents argue that the terms *bhūta* (past) and *bhavitā* (future becoming) of Brahman are negated in the stanza, whereby Brahman is neither a cause nor an effect like clay or pot. The opponents ultimately contend that the cause-effect relationship of Brahman is apparent and not real. Bhāskara is vehement in his criticism to fling the charge of wrongly directing their faith and interest towards meditation instead towards the contextual considerations and topical sequences based on the principles of *Mīmāṃsā* such as *śruti*, *liṅga*, *prakaraṇa* etc.[25] Bhāskara justifies his reading as correct and holds the view that the dispelling of Arjuna's ignorance is imminent and that a sudden jump to meditation without contextual sanction is unwarranted and illogical.[26] To thrust meditation on to the context by changing the reading is named by Bhāskara as *āhopuruṣikā* which means the bragging of a person arbitrarily promoted by extreme vanity, self conceit and high-handedness. The views of such persons are liable to cause confusion in the minds of those who are real seekers after truth[27]

d). Bhāskara raises an objection to the reading अविनाशिनो-प्रमेयस्य (BG. II. 19.) This reading is metrically wrong which

25. अन्ये पुनः... परब्रह्मोपासनमनया गीतया लक्ष्यते। नायं भूत इति च मृत्पिण्डवर्तो कारणत्वं निषिध्यते। भविता वा इति घटादिवदुत्पाद्यत्वं निषिध्यते। कार्यकारण-भावः ब्रह्मण्यौपाधिको न परमार्थिक इत्युक्तं भवतीति। तदिदं श्रद्धामात्रेण ब्रह्मो-पासनमुत्प्रेक्षितं, न श्रुतिलिङ्गप्रकरणगम्यम्।

26. अज्ञानमेव तावन्निरसनीयम्; किमति त्वरया ब्रह्मोपासनं कल्प्यते।

27. See F.N. 9 supra.

shall be only अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य. Bhāskara refutes the comments of some Bhāṣyakāras, who hold that the *Gītā śāstra* is meant only to remove *śoka* and *moha* and not to instigate Arjuna to do his own duty (*svadharma*). Bhāskara reminds the opponent that it is futile to advise the removal of *śoka* and *moha* after the commencement of the war. Lord Kṛṣṇa might have as well stayed at Dvārakā and composed the *Gītā* to teach *jñāna*, conducing to *mokṣa*. The very intention of teaching in the battle field is to teach *jñāna* and *karma* in full concordance for the attainment of salvation.[28]

e). Bhāskara while commenting upon the stanza वेदाविनाशिनम् (II. 22) directs his attack on Śaṅkara who strains and twists the words in the context to convey the sense of total renunciation of all *karma* and attributes the same as the central teaching of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He disproves the theory of Śaṅkara that *karma* is the path to be resorted to by the unwise or *avidvān* alone who are incompetent to take upto the path of *jñāna*. Bhāskara criticises this view that the categorical and assertive imperatives *yuddhyasva*, *karma kuru*, etc., become futile, had the Lord meant the total renunciation of all *karmas*.[29]

f). Bhāskara brings to light a careless interpretation of a commentator who interprets BG. II. 30 as though the stanza is a replica of the Vedic statement: श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः। Bhāskara sarcastically remarks that such an irrelevant and unwarranted interpretation unsuitable to the context and spirit of the text can behove a *śrotriya* alone.[30] He points out that no marks of the *śruti* are traceable in the stanza owing to the clear absence of potential participles. By mere concatenation

---

28. इदमेव प्रयोजनमर्जुनस्यान्येषां च ज्ञानसहितात् स्वधर्मानुष्ठानात् निःश्रेयसमुपदेक्ष्यामीति ।

29. अत्र क्लेशभीरवः केचित् स्वमतं भगवत्यारोप्य वर्णयन्ति विदुषः सर्वकर्मप्रतिषेध एव प्रकरणार्थोऽभिप्रेतो भगवत इति ।...अतो नेयं मृषाशा कर्तव्या ।

30. तदेतद् व्याख्यानं श्रोत्रियेष्वेव शोभते ।

of some catchwords or syllables it does not behove a commentator to create a novel idea regardless of the contextual sequences. Bhāskara suggests a parallel *mantra* which alone could befit the context.[31]

g). Bhāskara upholds the theory of perfect co-ordination of *jñāna* and *karma*, while discussing the implications of the terms *sāṃkhya* and *yoga* in the stanza,

ज्ञानयोगेन सांख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् । (III. 3.)

Bhāskara brings to light the shallowness of other commentators. He criticises the view of Śaṅkara who interprets the context to mean total renunciation of all *karmas*. He makes a humorous remark that such commentators attempt to hide the fruits from the tree by thick foliage.[32] Further he extends his attack that *karmatyāga* will result in all those who advocate the efficacy of *karma* entering voluntarily into the ocean.[33] Even for those who attained *Brahmajñāna* the necessity for performing *svadharma* is repeatedly stressed in the Vedas.[34]

Bhāskara challenges Śaṅkara that total renunciation of all *karmas* is not at all endorsed in the Vedas.[35] He cites the Vedic authority quoted by Śaṅkara in support of *sarvakarmatyāga* and holds that it is wrongly interpreted by him. The Upaniṣadic passage

न कर्मणा प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैकेनामृतत्वमानशुः[36]

is interpted by Bhāskara as negation of *karma* etc., signifies only the denial of *karma* of *kāmya* and *niṣiddha* catagories and not the total *karma*. He confirms his interpretation by citing a

31. श्रवणायापि बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः etc.

32. पत्रैरेव फलानि छादयन्तः प्रश्नमुत्तरं चान्यथा वर्णयन्ति ।

33. स्वच्छन्दतया सर्वे कर्मिणो ब्रह्मविदः समुद्रं प्रविशेयुः ।

34. तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन etc.

35. न चोपनिषत्सु सर्वत्यागगमकं लिङ्गमस्ति ।

36. This reading of Bhāskara sounds peculiar. The common reading is: 'न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके' etc.

parallel Vedic authority[37] where the word *nyāsa* is substituted in the place of *tyāga* or renunciation. Therefore it is specifically understood that *nyāsa* or *tyāga* does not convey the import of *sarvakarma-parityāga*. He interprets the term *nyāsa* to mean Brahman.

Bhāskara criticizes the interpreters who take *nyāsa* as a synonym for *saṃnyāsa*. He states that similarity of sounds with some modification will always mislead one towards a wrong interpretation. He cites an example from *Mīmāṃsā śāstra* where the Vedic passage 'आज्यैःस्तुवते' does not convey the meaning ghee by similarity of syllables but a collection of *sāmans* known as *ājya sāmans*. In this connection he quotes a *kārikā*, warning one to guard oneself from being carried away by the mere similarity of syllables while interpreting the word and its meaning in a particular context. There shall be an efficient scrutiny as to the complete concordance in respect of the words and their meaning in the context (पौर्वापर्य).[38]

h). Bhāskara interprets the word *naiṣkarmya* to signify *mokṣa* where there is the total absence of *karma* in the form of *puṇya* and *pāpa*[39]. This interpretation is indeed quite befitting the context whatever other Bhāṣyakāras may hold. The word *aśnute* (attains) becomes significant in association with *naiṣkarmya* used in the sense of *mokṣa*. He directs his criticism against those who interpret *naiṣkarmya* as total absence of all *karma*. In the drift of his arguments, he stresses the necessity of the combination of *karma* and *jñāna* as a *sine qua non* to the attaintment of *mokṣa*.

Bhāskara's theory of *jñāna-karma-samuccaya* is stressed in unequivocal terms in BG. III.14. The stanza expresses beyond doubt that one cannot attain *naiṣkarmya* which is *mokṣa* without beginning to perform *karma*. He will not attain *siddhi* or

37. न्यासमेषां तपसातिरिक्तमाहुः ।

38. ध्वनिमात्रकृतो ह्येव जनानां मतिविभ्रमः ।
पौर्वापर्यापरामृष्टः शब्दोऽन्यां कुरुते मतिम् ॥

39. निष्कर्मणो भावः नैष्कर्म्यम् । कर्मशब्देन पुण्यपापयोर्ग्रहणम् । तद्रहितं मोक्षमित्यर्थः ।

mokṣa by mere *jñāna* followed by the renunciation of *karma*.[40] Bhāskara then makes it quite clear that even for one who has realized Brahman, it is inevitable that he should perform his *nitya-karma* like *sandhyā-vandana* inasmuch as he does other deeds, as eating and moving around. Bhāskara cites the *Upadeśa-sāhasrī* of Śaṅkara where Udaṅka's story is illustrated. Udaṅka rejected the nectar when it was offered to him from the back part of the body of Indra in disguise of a Caṇḍāla, suspecting it to have become polluted by the mixture of urine. Though Udaṅka desired to drink nectar, he rejected it on account of the fear that he would become polluted, whereby performance of *svadharma* would be affected. So Bhāskara states that *karma* or *svadharma* is a necessary factor like *ātma-jñāna* and that both go hand in hand and conduce to *mokṣa*.

BHĀSKARA'S IDEA OF GOD AND HIS RELIGION

Bhāskara accepts *saguṇa Brahman* with auspicious qualities as against *nirguṇa Brahman*. He equates Brahman with Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva. He holds that Viṣṇu's abode is the highest goal to be attained by all the released souls[41]. He offers two-fold etymology of the word *vāsudeva* and thereby brings to light the cardinal metaphysical truths regarding Brahman as *jagatkāraṇa* and as *antaryāmin*[42]. These two aspects of Brahman are the fundamental basic principles on which the edifice of true Vedānta philosophy is laid. In relation to the same etymological explanation, he says specifically that Brahman assumes both the states as cause and effect.[43]

Bhāskara again specifically states that Brahman is both cause and effect like *suvarṇa* and *rucaka*[44]. Such of these views of Bhāskara as stated above appear to be opposed to his views of

---

40. कर्मसहितमेव ज्ञानं सिद्धिसाधनम् ।
41. On BG. VII. 19.
42. वसन्ति तस्मिन् सर्वभूतानि । वसति वान्तर्यामित्वेन सर्वभूतेष्विति वासुः । On BG , VIII. 7. ईश्वरो हि सर्वज्ञः कर्मानुसारी चित्तवृत्तेर्नियन्ता ।
43. कारणात्मना प्रपञ्चात्मना चावस्थित इति प्रतिपद्यते ।
44. On BG., IV. 35.

bhedābheda based on *upādhi*. But it may probably be that his study of the *Gītā* made him later change his philosophical dogmas as found in his *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*. The remark of Udayana 'ब्रह्मपरिणाम: भास्करगोत्रे युज्यते' is quite meet if Bhāskara's interpretation of the later part of BG. is taken into consideration, where *pariṇāma* aspect of Brahman is expounded. It is obvious that *bhūtākāśa* or *ghaṭākāśa* explanations based on *upādhi* examples do not hold water if the *pariṇāma* theory is to be given preference on the basis of the *Gītā-bhāṣya*.

Bhāskara holds that the performance of *kāmya-karmas* are optional and that *nitya* and *naimittika karmas* are to be performed as a compulsory measure along with *jñāna-yoga*. *Niṣiddha-karmas* are to be absolutely given up for ever. He maintains that *yajñas* symbolically represent Viṣṇu for whose propitiation or *ārādhana*[45] they are specified. He warns that one should direct one's pointed devotion only to Lord Viṣṇu and completely ignore the worship of minor Gods. He is emphatic in asserting that Viṣṇu alone[46] can save and that others could not at all help in achieving the highest goal. He holds that such of those desirous of obtaining sons, cattle, etc,. being prompted by their strong impressions of their previous births, propitiate Rudra, Indra, Āditya. Durga, Gaṇapati, etc.[47] He cautions them that there cannot be any final redemption by their devotion to other deities.

देवतान्तरभक्तानां च तद्वासितचेतसां च ततो निवृत्तिर्नास्ति ।

While specifying the height of ecstacy of *sthitaprajña*, Bhāskara is eloquent to describe that the realization of Brahman will be of the nature of delightfully tasting nectar possessed of potent medicinal effect and finally promoting deep love towards Him.[48] This shows how Bhāskara evaluated the spritual love towards Brahman as *bhakti* in the form of uninteruputed nectarious flow.

45. On BG; II. 51. ईश्वराराधनार्थं तु कर्म.., Also see ibid; II. 49 and III. 9.

46. ibid; VII. 19: यतो नारायणमेव ते भजन्ते ।

47. ibid; VII. 20.

48. On BG; II. 56.

Bhāskara enumerates, *Bilva* leaves, *Karavīra* flowers, and *Badara* fruits as offerings of Lord Viṣṇu during His *ārādhana*.[49] It is noteworthy that Bhāskara specifically mentions *Bilva patra* as the main offering among leaves. The custom and usage in the Viṣṇu temples is the offering of *Tulasī* leaves alone and it appears to be strange how *Bilva* leaves are recommended by Bhāskara. This shows that during Bhāskara's time Bilva was alone offered by virtue of its being mentioned in the *Śrīsūkta*, as the abode of Lakṣmī.[50] Perhaps the *Vaiṣṇavabhagavaccāhāstras* or *Āgamas* extant at the time of Bhāskara made no distinction between *Bilva* and *Tulasī* as offerings to Lord Viṣṇu.. *Bilva* is still the special leaf offering to Lord Śrīnivāsa on Tirupati hills, whose identity with Lord Viṣṇu is unquestionable and on whose chest Goddess Lakṣmī resides. If such a staunch votary of Lord Viṣṇu as Bhāskara who ignores other dieties like Rudra should chiefly mention *Bilva*, it can be deduced that *Bilva* was not the distinct offering to Śiva alone as observed now-a-days. Hence it is certain from the version of Bhāskara that *Bilva* has been the chief leaf-offering to Lord Viṣṇu which today as a relic is observed on special occasions in the *Dhanurmāsa-ārādhana* to Lord Veṅkateśvara at Tirupati.

49. ibid; IX. 31.

50. बिल्वनिलया ।

V. VARADACHARI

GĪTĀ ACCORDING TO ABHINAVAGUPTA

The schools of Śaivism in Kashmir are based on the Śaiva Āgamas[1] and were originally brought under three groups[2] Dvaita, Dvaitādvaita and Advaita. The Dvaita and Dvaitādvaita groups became amalgamated into a common group called *Siddhānta*.[3] From the philosophical point of view, the systems were grouped into three heads called *Karma, Kaula and Trika*.[4] The *Trika* system has three subgroups by the names *Pratyabhijñāśāstra, Āgamaśāstra and Spandaśāstra*. These deal respectively with the interpretation of the doctrines on logical grounds, the revelational aspect of the system and the important works of the school.[5]

The ultimate Reality in the school of Pratyabhijñā is *cit* or Maheśvara whose nature is manifest into the universe consisting of an infinite variety of sentient and insentient beings.[6] The universe is real and is identical with the ultimate Reality[7]. All is therefore the external manifestation at the will of the Supreme Be-

1. There are 92 Śaiva Āgamas – Vide :- K.C. Pandey : *Abhinavagupta : A study*, p. 48.
2. op. cit., pp. 75–80.
3. op. cit., pp. 102–103.
4. op. cit., p. 35; Several explanations are offered to justify the significance of the name *'trika'* op. cit., pp. 169–171.
5. Jaideva Singh : *Introduction to Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam* - Text and Translation – Varanasi p. 2.
6. Pandey : – p. 40.
7. Difference is apparent. Vide :- वस्तुत: परमकारणात्परमात्मनो मत्त: परमेश्वरादभिन्नापि मन्मायावशाद्भेदमिवापन्ना प्रकृति: ।

   Rāmakaṇṭha on BG. VII. 6;

   जीवपरमात्मनोर्नास्ति मनागापि वास्तवो भेद: ।

   ibid., XV. 7; Pandey: p. 172.

ing and is independent of any cause.[8] Hence what exi ts is called *ābhāsa*.[9] The subject and object are both manifestations of the Supreme Being.[10] The phenomenon of knowledge is like the rise of two waves in the sea of un versal consciousness. One of these has *nairmalya*, the capacity to receive reflection and the other is without it. The former is called *jīvābhāsa* and the latter *jaḍābhāsa*. Universal consciousness is the souι ce of all psychological phenomena. Both are essentially the same as their source.[11]

However, the self is ignorant of its identity with the ultimate Reality because of its connection with the physical body. This innate ignorance is called *āṇavamala* and is responsible for the bondage of the individual. Hence the self considers itself as a separate entity.[12] *Mokṣa* or final release consists in the recognition (*pratyabhījñā*) of its real nature by the self.[13] It is the state of perfect purity of consciousness which is subjectivistic and transcendental. During this state, the self recognizes its identity with Maheśvara. This state is attainable only by the descent of divine grace (*śaktipāta*) on the self.[14] This grace is not however

---

8. No material cause is needed for the creation of the world: एतेन च मायाप्रकृत्युपादानाधीनकर्तृत्ववादो निरस्त: ।
   Rāmakaṇṭha's *Sarvatobhadra*. p. 6.
   The word *māyā* may be taken to show that these commentators of Kashmir were familiar with tne Advaita teachings of Śaṃkara: For details see Abhinavagupta: A Study. pp. 88-90, *Pratyabhijñāvimarśinī* II p. 146.
9. Vide: तत्र तस्मै भगवते नम:, यस्मिन् सर्वमिदमत्यन्तभिन्नानन्ताभासमयं भावजातं संवेद्यमानतामात्रनिबन्धनतत्तत्स्वात्मलाभं सत् ।
   Sarvatobhadra p. 4; Pandey: pp. 40, pp.210-220.
10. op. cit.: pp. 221, 225-226.
11. op. cit p 221.
12. ibid: pp. 182-183.
13. Vide :- मोक्षो हि नाम नैवान्य: स्वरूपप्रथनं हि तत् ।
    Vide:- *Tantrāloka* I P. 192. Jaideva Singh: op. cit. P. 16; Pandey: op. cit. pp. 172-178, 191.
14. Singh. op. cit. p. 17.

obtained by the self through caprice. Three means are recognized for obtaining this grace.[15] They are *Āṇavopāya*, *Śāktopāya* and *Śāmbhavopāya*. *Āṇavopāya*, which is also called *Kriyopāya*, consists in the observance of the rituals. The second means is also called *Jñānopāya* and it is mainly concerned with the activities of the mind. The last mentioned is intended for advanced aspirants who are required to practise meditation on *Śiva-tattva*. Through the second method, the concept of duality changes to that of unity.

Ultimate Reality has two aspects namely transcendental (*Viśvottīrṇa*) and immanent (*viśvamaya*).[16] The self has *prakāśa* and *vimarśa* which enable it to know itself and which are known as *svātantrya-śakti*[17].

Kṛṣṇa is referred to as *Guru* in the Śaiva Āgamas.[18] The visits[19] which Kṛṣṇa paid to Kailāsa and the instructions[20] which he received from Upamanyu on the mode of worshipping Śiva, made the exponents of Kashmir Śaivism treat Kṛṣṇa as a follower of *Trika*. The *Bhagavadgītā* therefore came to be considered as one of the basic texts for Śaivism. Vasugupta,[21]

15. Pandey: op. cit., pp. 186–191.
16. Vide :- सर्वाकृतिर्विश्वमयः निराकृतिर्विश्वोत्तीर्णः ।
    Tantrāloka I p. 105; Abhinavagupta: A Study pp. 199–200.
17. Pandey op. cit., pp.203–205.
18. Vide :- एतदेव शब्दार्थद्वारकं गीताग्रन्थेन संवादयति येऽप्यन्यदेवताभक्ता इत्यतो गुरुरादिशत् ।
    Tantrāloka I p. 162.
    गुरुरिति तन्त्रिकार्थोपदेष्टा भगवान् वासुदेवः ।
    Jayaratha on this.
    For a similar reference. see Abhinavagupta on BG. VIII. 6. He is also referred to as *Muni*.
    Vide: Abhinavagupta on BG. IV. 26; VIII. 14, 15; XVIII.3.
19. *Mahābhārata* : *Droṇaparvan* Ch. 80, 81; *Anuśāsanaparvan* Ch. 203.
20. ibid., Ch. 45.
21. He lived in the first half of the 9th century. He was the earlist among the Kashmirian scholars to comment on BG. Introduction to *Sarvatobhadra*, commentary of Rāmakaṇṭha on the Gītā P. *XXXVII*. It is called *Vāsavi Ṭīkā*. Vide: Pandey, op. cit., p 94. The commentary is not extant.

Ānandavardhana,[22] Rāmakaṇṭha[23], Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara,[24] Abhinavagupta and Rājānaka Lasakāka[25] commented on the *Gītā*. The commentaries of Rāmakaṇṭha and Abhinavagupta have alone appeared in print. All these commentators must have either belonged to Kashmir or influenced by the Kashmir traditions. They[26] all count the number of *ślokas* in the *Gītā* as more than 700. Abhinavagupta[27] has 22 more than 700 and in a particular context treats three *ślokas* as spurious[28].

Abhinavaguputa flourished in the beginning of the 11th century A.D.[29] and attained proficiency in several branches of study through his training in them under the leading exponents

---

22. This writer is the same as the author of the *Dhvanyāloka*. For information on his commentary on the *Gītā*, see Introduction to Rāmakaṇṭa's *Sarvatobhadra* pp. XIX.
23. Rāmakaṇṭha was the younger brother of Muktākaṇa, who flourished in the court of Avantivarman of Kashmir (857–884 A.D.). He was the pupil of Utpala who was the son and pupil of Somānanda. Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary is called *Bhagavadgītāvivaraṇam* and *Sarvatobhadra*. This was published in the Madras University Sanskrit Series. For details, see Introduction to *Sarvatobhadra* P. XXXIX.
24. Bhaṭṭabhāskara's commentary is recently published at Kāśi for the first nine chapters of BG. Abhinavagupta mentions Bhāskara in his commentary on BG. XVIII. 2. His identity with Bhāskara, the famous Vedāntin is yet to be established, although there is reference here to *jñānakarmasamuccayavāda*. It is questioned by S.K. Belvalkar. See Introduction to *Sarvatobhadra*, p. XXVII. If his identity is to be admitted, he must have preceded Abhinavagupta and could be assigned to the 10th Century A.D.
25. This commentary is called *Lāsakī* and the Ms: is said to be available. Vide: Introduction by K.C. Pandey to *Pratyabhijñāvimarśinī*. p. XXXVIII.
26. See for a discussion on this: Introduction to the *Sarvatobhadra*, pp. XVI to XIX.
27. ibid , XLIII to LXXX.
    Abhinavagupta on BG. XIV 16.
28. Vide : अत्र केचिदसंबद्धाः श्लोकाः कल्पिताः । पुनरुक्तत्वात्ते त्याज्या एव ।
    Abhinavagupta on BG. XIV. 16.
29. Pandey : op. cit., pp. 6–7.

of them.[30] Somānanda[31] and Utpala[32] were already names of pioneers who built up the school of Pratyabhijñā Bhaṭṭendu-raja,[33] who came in the line of these two scholars, acquainted Abhinavagupta with the purport of the *Gītā*. The *Bhagavad-gītārthasaṃgraha*, which he wrote as a commentary on the *Gītā*, is a critical summary of the subject matter of the *Gītā*, besides containing an exposition of most of the verses.

God is described here as creating a part of Himself for the sake of mankind.[34] He does this through His *svātantrya-śakti* and hence His descent is divine. So are His deeds which do not bind Him.[35]

The concepts of *Āṇavopāya* and *Śāktopāya* made the exponents of the Pratyabhijñā school recognize *jñāna* and *karma* as inseparably associated and as a single means for obtaining final release.[36] Here *jñāna* plays a dominant role relegating *karma* to a secondary status;[37] *Karma*, which is enjoined in the Vedas, is to be done without expectation for the results, in order that it may not bind the doer.[38] It must also

30. ibid., pp 10–11. He wrote a number of works., ibid., 22 to 24. His *Tantrāloka* is encyclopaedic in 36 chapters out of which 14 have appeared in print - ibid., PP. 45-46. For details regarding the other works, see ibid., pp. 22 - 65.
31. Somānanda (850 A.D.) was the founder of the Pratyabhijñā school, the principles of which were laid down by him in his *Śivadṛṣṭi*. Pandey; op. cit., p. 83.
32. Utpala is the author of the *Pratyabhijñāsūtra* with *Vṛtti and Vivṛti* - ibid., p.99.
33. Bhaṭṭendurāja was the pupil of Mukula who was the son and pupil of Kallaṭa, pupil of Somānanda. ibid., p. 74.
34. Abhinavagupta on BG. - IV.7, where he reads *ātmāṃśam* in the place of *ātmānam*.
35. ibid., IV 9.
36. Vide : ज्ञानं कर्मणा रहितं न भवति । कर्म कौशलोपेतं ज्ञानरहितं न भवति । इत्येकमेव वस्तु ज्ञानकर्मणी ।
ibid., III 4. See also Introduction to *Sarvatobhadra* p. XL.
37. Vide : तत्र न द्वयो: प्राधान्यं युक्तमपि तु ज्ञानस्य ।
Abhinavagupta on BG. III. 2.
38. ibid., XVIII. 2. Rāmakaṇṭha on II. 48.

be done without any sense of attachment.[39] The course of *karma* is hard to understand. It is not also possible to draw the line of distinction between *karma* and *vikarma*. For instance, the deeds of the bad type such as killing the beasts of prey, entail some good also, namely, providing people with security. Similarly, while doing the good acts like Agniṣṭoma, there is a tinge of badness in it in the form of slaughtering the animals. When any activity is taken up, whether physical, verbal or mental, there is *karma* of one kind or other. When one of them is given up, the others are there and so *karma* could not be totally avoided. It is therefore suggested that the fire of knowledge alone can burn *karma* whether of good or bad kind.[40] Besides, *saṃnyāsa* cannot be undertaken by those who do not take to *karma*.[41] The words *na niragniḥ* in VI. 1. mean that a man cannot live without using the fire and cannot also be without activity.

The *Ābhāsavāda* has enabled Abhinavagupta interpret IV.18. to mean that he who does his work with the realization that he is not the agent is the right type of man. He is identical with every other agent. What others do are as good as the work done by him.[42]

There are some noteworthy interpretations in the commentary of Abhinavagupta. The word *māmaka* in I. 1. is explained as *mameti kāyanti*. 'shouting mine' and so refers to the Kauravas, while the word *pāṇḍava* means the Paṇḍavas who are righteous. The word *ananya* in IX. 22. must refer to those who have no goal for their aspirations except God. The word '*yoga*' in

39. Vide :- *Tantrāloka* VI 85, 87; Abhinavagupta on BG. II. 45.
40. Ibid., IV. 17.
41. Ibid., V.6.
42. Vide : अकर्मणि च परैः प्रमातृभिः कृते कर्मणि पूजादौ कर्म क्रियां जनयति । एते कर्तारः सर्वेऽहमेवेति दृष्ट्या । "पूजकैरविभेदेन सदा पूजेति पूजनम्" इति सोमानन्दपादाः ।

In this aspect of *ābhāsavāda*, matter and spirit are identical.
Vide :-
न भोग्यं व्यतिरिक्तं हि भोक्तुस्त्वत्तो विभाव्यते ।
एष एव हि भोगो यत्तादात्म्यं भोक्तृभोग्ययोः ॥
Laghuprakrīyā of Abhinavagupta.

IX.22. means acquisition of the Lord's nature which was not attained before and so the word *kṣema* means protecting that nature. The word *avidhi* is interpreted as another vidhi [43] It is not defective (*duṣṭavidhi*). Upholding the sense of IX. 32, Abhinavagupta refers to the interpretation offered by some scholars for this according to which this *śloka* emphasizes the greatness of the Brahmins and Kṣatriyas and denies reference to women and others. According to Abhinavagupta, these scholars restrict the power of God, do not tolerate God being higly sympathetic, argue against the concept of Advaita which is based on the Abhāsavāda and so become the object of derision. The self can not enter (āveśa) into God except through the intensity of the descent of God's grace and except through the favour of the master whom he should serve as not different from Maheśvara.

On XIII 2, the author states that though the self is called *kṣetrajña* the real *kṣetrajña* is the Lord with reference to all the selves and all bodies. The word '*viddhi*' which occurs here must be taken to have the causal sense suppressed, for He is the only *kṣetrajña* whose grace renders the insentient into sentient. The words *yajante nāma* in XVI. 17, are to be taken as referring to the sacrifices that bear no result. Alternatively, they shall mean sacrifices which are so only in name, or those which are reputed to be so and which are not sacrifies in reality. '*Praṇipāta*' in IV. 34, means devotion and '*paripraśna*' there itself conveys the sense of *ūha, apoha, tarka, vitarka* and others. The word *jñāninaḥ* means the sense-organs and so the word *upadekṣyanti* shall mean 'to lead near' or 'point out.'

The sense of of V. 18. is that those who have acquired correct knowledge will find the world together with the things there as Brahman, although the world appears in full diversity to those whose vision is obscured by ignorance. Hence the enligh-

43. All the commentators take the word *avidhi*, as the negation of the proper eourse. Abhinavagupta alone interprets the word as '*anyo vidhiḥ*'. The negative particle cannot convey the sense of *another*. This interpretation is hardly justifiable. The case of the word *adharma* is different.

tened ones no not discriminate between a Brahmin, cow, elephant, dog and outcaste but yet do not treat them alike for purposes of wordly transactions. '*Śucīnām*' in VI. 41. means those whose mind is affected by a part of the Lord The mere desire to know Yoga will not take the aspirant beyond *śabdabrahman*. The *mantras* are required to be studied and practised and at the end of his life, this aspirant will become Vāsudeva. He does not become then a *siddha*. He takes many births similar to this Since he has no other work and has interest only in the work of the Lord, he is considered to be a *yogabhraṣṭa*. The word *asat* in XI. 37. means a category and so is an object of knowledge. Or, *abhāva* becomes a knowable and becomes not different from the existence of the Supreme Person. The word *bhūtabhavodbhavakara* in VI. 44. means that which brings about the manifestation of the existence of the beings which are sentient and insentient.

The author refers on VI.25 to an interpretation which means that one shall not think of anything and reject it, as it would uphold a nihilistic explanation. What the *śloka* means is that one shall get mental courage, lessen the grief which arises through desires and shall not think of taking possession of the objects or giving them up. Similarly, in VIII. 16, *ābrahmabhuvanāllōkāḥ punarāvartinaḥ* does not mean that people who go to the region of Brahmā are reborn, for then, a world beyond this will have to be admitted. What it means is that all the regions through which one passes till he reaches the region of Brahmā are of such a nature that the selves which reach them have to return to the world.

While interpreting III.37. the words *kāma* and *krodha* which are used separately with *eṣa* following each show that they are eternally related to each other. The three *ślokas* which follow this (not found in the Vulgate) mean that the results of *rajoguṇa* are hardly perceptible when they take their rise. They get easily mixed up with pleasure and cause delusion among people. That is why, they are not easily got over. Egoism in the case of a person arising out of the joy that he is born in a

noble family makes him conceited. This helps him in taking advantage of others' weaknesses and in causing trouble to them.

Abhinavagupta means that Arjuna got only incentive to fight.[44] He did not get the knowledge of reality, as otherwise, the *Anugītā* would not have served any purpose to him.

Abhinavagupta's readings of the text of the Gītā differ from those of the Vulgate text. He reads *sthiraprajña* in the place of *sthitaprajña* (II 54). *śāśvatadharmagoptā* is read as *sāttvatadharmagoptā* (XI 18). where the word *sāttvata* is explained thus :- The word *sattva* means non-difference between action (*kriyā*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) and this should be offered to God. Those who have done this are *sāttvatas*. There are many other readings[45] which are convincing in the light of the concept of the ultimate Reality in the school.

This commentary contains citations from the works of others and refers to the works[46] of others and also his own.[47] He seems to be guided in holding fast to his interpretation by what was taught to him by his preceptors,[48] some of whom could be Bhaṭṭaendurāja and Lakṣmaṇa Gupta.[49]

---

44. On BG., XVIII. 3: एवमत्र नष्टो मोह इत्यादिना युद्धप्रवृत्तिस्तावदर्जुनस्योत्पन्ना न तु सम्यग्ब्रह्मवित्त्वं जातमिति सूचयन् भाविनोऽनुगीतार्थस्यावकाशं ददाति। *Anugītā* forms part of Ch. 17 to 51. of *Āśvamedhika Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*.
45. The readings in the various recensions of BG. are given by the editor of the *Sarvatobhadra* on pp. XLIII to LXXX, See Abhinavagupta's readings in II.47, 60, IV.7.
46. *Bhāgavata* is cited and discussed in XIV. 8, *Mahābhārata* in XVII.23 and *Śivopaniṣat* in VII.11.
47. Vide :- VI. 29; IX. 16; 17, 25; XI. 18; XII. 7, 11; XV. 16.
48. Vide :- VIII. 7, 14; IX. 23; XV. 12
49. Vide :- VIII. 27.

K. DAKSHINA MURTHY

NIMBĀRKA AND THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ

यो ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वं यो वै वेदांश्च प्रहिणोति तस्मै ।
तं ह देवमात्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये ॥

I, desirous of final release from *saṃsāra*, surrender unto that Supreme Being, who is illumination to the self and intellect and who had made the creator first and sent him the sacred scriptures. Thus the surrender is scriptural.

Knowledge of Brahman is unattainable without the guidance of *Guru*. So, the Vedānta gives a prominent place to *Guru* and elevates him to the level of the Supreme.

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥

Falling in line with the Vedic teachings, the *Bhagavadgītā* also supports the view :

तद् विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।   (IV. 34.)

The devotee, therefore, surrenders himself both to the Lord and the preceptor. This emphasis on the place of *Guru is* the distinguishing feature of the theistic Vedānta systems.

We see three distinet phases in the growth and development of Indian philosophy. They are the Vedic, the Upaniṣadic and the post-Vedic. They may also be described as the cosmological, the metaphysical, and the systematic stages, respectively. The metaphysical or the Upaniṣadic philosophy appears to have divergent and contradictory views such as unity and plurality, assertion of attributes and their negation with

regard to the Supreme. This contradiction necessitated the birth of systematic or Post-Upaniṣadic philosophy. Eminent exponents of Indian philosophy tried their best to reconcile the divergent views in the Upaniṣadic texts. It is in this process of exposition of Indian philosophy that the following seven school of thought subsequently came into being:–

Absolute monism of Śaṅkara, Dualism of Madhva and Viṣṇusvāmin, qualified monism of Śuka, Rāmānuja and Śrīkaṇṭha, pure monism of Vallabha, monism as qualified by Śakti (*Śakti-viśiṣṭādvita*) of Śrīpati, Dualism cum monism of Bhāskara and Nimbārka and Dualism cum monism as irreconcilable (*acintya-dvaitādvaita*) of Balabhadra.

Each school of thought derived inspiration from the Upaniṣadic texts and evolved its own system of philosophy. It also tried wherever possible, to show unity and consistency among the divergent views expressed in the Upaniṣads and remained indifferent wherever it was not possible.

Śrī Śaṅkara was the foremost among such exponents. He propounded the theory of absolute monism and explained the plurality by the theory of illusion or *Māyā*. Plurality, according to Śaṅkara, is false or unreal. The awareness of identity of the soul with Brahman is liberation Thus, the philosophy of Śaṅkara can be summed up in the oft-quoted words:

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।

The philosophy of Śaṅkara, no doubt, is profound and valuable. However it is not within the reach of the common man who is bent on having a personal God. So, the system of Śaṅkara left a vacuum to be filled in by the subsequent exponents like Rāmānuja, Vallabha, and Nimbārka. They could satisfy the need of the ordinary people by introducing the cult of a personal God and devotion to Him. They opine that *bhakti*, and *Māyā* are totally incompatible, for *bhakti* being composed of love can come into being only when the lover and beloved are true entities. The so called personal God of Śaṅkara is only an empirical reality, However, his theory of

Māyā has become the centre of criticism in the hands of Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha and Nimbārka who lay emphasis on consecretion and devotion as the final means of release. They find their views amply endorsed by the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Kaṭhopaniṣat*:

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥
(*Kaṭha*. U.)

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ (BG. X. 10, 11.)

Nimbārka, known as the founder of the system of *Dvaitādvaita*, therefore, lays emphasis on this aspect. To establish his views he wrote the *Daśaślokī* also known as *Siddhāntāratna*.

निम्बार्को दशभिः श्लोकैः प्रोचे तत्त्वानि तत्त्ववित् ।
तान् व्याचष्टे हरिव्यासः संक्षिप्तश्रुतियुक्तिभिः ॥ (SKB., p. 1.)

The *ślokas* are either in *Vaṃśastha* or *Upajāti* metre written in a simple and lucid style and are claimed to be unique in their profoundity of thought. Scholars like Puruṣottama-prasāda, Giridhara-prapanna and Harivyāsa Muni have, in their commentaries on the *Daśaślokī* known as *Gurumañjūṣā*, *Laghumañjūṣā* and *Siddhāntakusumāñjalibhāṣya*, respectively, tried to analyse his philosophy with great skill. They divide the ten *ślokas* into four sections according to their theme and content:

तत्त्वत्रयं प्रथमके वाक्यार्थं च द्वितीयके ।
तृतीये साधनं प्रोक्तं फलं कोष्ठे चतुर्थके ॥ (*Laghumañjūṣā*, p. 2)

These sections are also known as *koṣṭhikās*. The first *koṣṭhikā* consists of the first five *ślokas*, in which Nimbārka

discussess the nature of God, spirit, and matter. The first two *ślokas* define *Jīva* and its characterestic features.

Here the commentator, Harivyāsa Muni, explains that the system, accepts three *parmāṇas*, namely, perception, inference and verbal testimony. The nature of the first two is said to be of inconstant disposition. The third is divided into *laukika* and *alaukika*. The *alaukika* is the highest authority in deciding the ultimate truth. The *Bhagavad-gītā* is considered in this system as the highest authority.

The Vedas are accepted as created and destroyed. In this connection the words created and destroyed are explained as manifestation and non-manifestation (*āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva*) but not as the change of order in the Vedic text (*ānupūrvyanyathābhāva*)

(*Setukā* of Sundarabhaṭṭa, p. 93.)

The *Jīva* is of the nature of knowledge (*jñānasvarūpa*). It is not the phenomenon of knowledge in the sense in which the Sankarites understood the word. *Jīva* is supposed to know even without the help of the sense organs and it is in this sense that the technical terms like *svayaṃjyoti* and *prajñānaghana* as applied to *Jīva* are to be construed. *Jīva* is also acccepted as knower. He can be both the knowledge and the posses or of knowledge at one and the same time just as the sun is both the light and the source of light simultaneously.

Ego is another important feature of *Jīva*. It continues to persist not only in the state of his *jāgrat* but also in the state of his liberation. The ego is also a feature of the Supreme. Hence Śrī Kṛṣṇa refers to Himself frequently in the first person in the *Gītā*. He is Puruṣottama who is omniscient and at the same time identical with the ego or *asmadartha*. Not only knowledge and ego are common to both *Jīva* and *Īśvara* but the eight qualities enumerated as सोऽपहतपाप्मा विजरो विमृत्युर्विशोकोऽविजिघित्सोऽपिपासः सत्यकामः सत्यसंकल्पः ॥ (Ch. U. VIII. 7.3.) are common to both of them. Thus *Jīva* is both different and not different from Brahman who is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

This theory of *bhedābheda* or *dvaitādvaita* is the principle tenet of the system of Nimbārka. As a matter of fact the theory of *bhedābheda* had already been expounded by Bhāskara who accepted it under conditions of bondage and release. But Nimbārka has taken up a new and different stand to prove it unconditioned. The *bhedābheda* relationship of *Jīva* with Vāsudeva, the Supreme, is natural and simultaneous in his system. (VP. on BS. III. 2 28.)

The Upaniṣadic texts explaining *bheda* are equally authentic as those explaining *abheda* since both of them are scriptures. None of them can be sublated by the other. Therefore Nimbārka cleverly thought of accepting both *bheda* and *abheda* on an equal basis.

The pairs of contradictory terms, like *bheda-abheda*, *asti-nāsti* and so on, with regard to one and the same thing are untenable. Such untenability is taken up as a basis by all thinkers including Nimbārka, and excluding Rāmānuja in criticising Jainism, under BS. II. 2.31 : नैकस्मिन्न संभवात् which is based on the seven-fold theory consisting of such untenable pairs of terms. In fact the Jains also accept such pairs of terms only under a condition. As a matter of fact that is the only way left to thinkers to adjust such divergent terms. The peculiarity of the system of Nimbārka is that he accepts both *bheda* and *abheda* as natural and simultaneous, which is unthinkable. So, the subsequent thinker, Balabhadra, maintained *acintya dvaitādvaita*. He means that the relationship of *bheda* and *abheda* is unthinkable or irreconcilable. *Jīva* is also accepted as agent, *(kartṛ)*. It retains this quality in all its states including its liberation. So, this system attaches much importance to the face value of कर्ता शास्त्रर्थवत्त्वात् (BS. II. 3.32.)

Wherever a denial of this agency to *Jīva* appears in the scriptures, the followers of this system explain away that denial is not a total denial but as a denial of its independent agency.

Jīva is also enjoyer (*bhoktṛ*) essentially in all the conditions. But *Jīva* is always dependant on Hari. Thus although

resembling Him in being knowledge and knower it is at the same time distinguished from Him by its dependence. This quality of dependence or of being controlled (*niyāmytva*), is the very nature of *Jīva* even in the state of its release just as the quality of being the controller (*niyantṛtva*) forms the eternal nature of Vāsudeva.

Jīva is also atomic in size. To prove this the followers of Nimbārka quote the *Bhagavad-gītā* :

ममैवांशो जीवलाके जीवभूत: सनातन: । (XV. 7.)

One of its essential attributes, knowledge, helps it to experience pleasure and pain all over the body at the same time:

यथा प्रकशयत्येक: कृत्स्नं लोकमिमं रवि: । (BG. XIII. 33.)

As the one sun illumines all this world, so does the embodied one.

The true from of *Jīva* becomes distorted and obscure by its contact with *karma*. *Karma* is the result of ignorance which is without beginning. Ignorance *moha* or *māyā*, is defined as real and positive. It can be removed by *brahmajñāna* or the knowledge of the Supreme. This knowledge is attained with the help of *Niyamādṛṣta* which is the product of *śravaṇa* and *manana*. This ignorance is otherwise known as *avidyā*. It is two-fold. One aspect of it obstructs the vision of *Jīva* in its attempt to know the Supreme and His attributes and, the other incapacitates *Jīva* from realising its *pūrṇānanda*. The first aspect is removed when the Supreme is directly apprehended and the second is destroyed through the unlimited grace of the Lord. *Jīvas* are also classified as *mukta*, *bhadda*, *baddhamukta*, etc.

In the third *śloka* of the *Daśaślokī* the matter, *acetana*, is discussed. It is of three kinds : *aprākṛta* not derived from *prakṛti* or the primordial matter; for example, the effulgence of *Īśvara; prākṛta* which is from *prakṛti* such as *mahat*, *ahaṃkāra*, the five elements, etc. which are similar to the twenty four principles of the Sāṃkhyas; and *kāla* or time which is accepted as governing the matter.

The fourth *śloka* describes the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu :

स्वभावतेऽपास्तसमस्तदोष-
मशेषकल्यणगुणैकराशिम् ।
व्यूहांगिनं ब्रह्म परं वरेण्यं
ध्यायेम कृष्णं कमलेक्षणं हरिम् ॥

He is devoid of all the defects of nature and is the abode of all auspicious qualities. This *śloka* also enjoins the meditation on the Supreme. The fifth *śloka* says that the Supreme is to be meditated upon in the company of His consorts Śrī, Bhū and Nilā.

The second *koṣṭhikā* consists of the sixth and the seventh *ślokas*. The sixth *śloka* says that there are no caste restrictions in the meditation of the Supreme. The *Bhagavad-gītā* also endorses the same view :

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥ (IX.32.)

The seventh *śloka* describes the significance of hearing, *śravaṇa*; He should be heard of, contemplated upon and meditated upon. *Śravaṇa* directly helps in meditation.

The eighth and the nineth *ślokas* constitute the third *koṣṭhikā*. The eighth *śloka* enjoins *prapatti*, which is the complete surrender of the aspirant to the Supreme. This *śloka* also enjoins *gurvājñānuvṛtti*, obedience to the commands of the preceptor. The nineth *śloka* explains devotion.

The tenth *śloka* forms the fourth and the final *koṣṭhikā*. In this *śloka* Nimbārka states that an aspirant should know the character of an aspirant, the aspired thing, fruit of His grace, the distinctive features of devotion and the nature of obstacles.

The quintessence of the *Gītā* according to the system of Nimbārka is that *parā bhakti*, absolute devotion, is the only

means of salvation; *ātmajñāna* or the knowledge of Self leads to it; *niṣkāma-karma* or disinterested actions help to acquire knowledge of self and also to purify the *Jīva*. Becoming a *sthitaprajña*, one who retains equanimity of mind in pleasure and pain under all circumstances, *Jiva* attains perfect tranquillity and becomes free from all distress.

This essential teaching is found well explained in the first two chapters of the *Gītā*. In the first chapter Arjuna displays his grief, despondency and delusion as mark of his eligibility to receive instruction in the knowledge of Self. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the Self thoroughly and clearly in the second chapter. So, according to Keśava Kāśmiribhaṭṭa these two chapters constsitute the whole *Gītā* in its true form and the rest of the chapters are only an elaboration of the same.

भगवत्प्राप्तिहेतुस्तत्परा भक्तिर्हि वक्ष्यते ।
तदङ्गमात्मविज्ञानं साधनं तस्य कर्म च ॥
असङ्गः तेन शुद्धात्मा स्थितप्रज्ञो भवेत्ततः ।
सर्वदुःखविनिर्मुक्तः परां शान्तिं निगच्छति ॥
इति गीतार्थसंक्षेपः श्रीकृष्णेन कृपावशात् ।
अध्यायेऽस्मिन् समादिष्टः भक्तानां हितसिद्धये ॥

(*Tattvaprakāśikā*. p. 217.)

As in the system of Rāmānuja, *prapatti* or surrender is the cardinal principle of Nimbārka's philosophy. This surrender is six fold : Mental attitude to follow His will, mental attitude to avoid all that is opposed to His will, trust in protection, prayer to Him for protection, self surrender and sense of helplssness.

आनुकूल्यस्य संकल्पः प्रातिकूल्यस्य वर्जनम् ।
रक्षिष्यतीति विश्वासो गोप्तृत्ववरणं तथा ।
आत्मनिक्षेपकार्पण्ये षड्विधा शरणागतिः ॥

Of these the fifth, Self-surrender, is the principal and the other five are subsidiaries helping the Self-surrender.

Self surrender is also found as the central teaching of the *Bhagavad-gītā* where in the conclusion Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna:

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ (XVIII.66.)

In fact the *Bhagavad-gītā* begins only with Arjuna's surrender unto the Lord:

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वा धर्मसंमूढचेताः।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥
(II. 7.)

The first principle of surrender is seen in the Lord's statement:

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ॥ (VI. 31.)

A person seeing Vāsudeva in all beings can never wish to injure others. This is the mental attitude to follow His will. In the sixteenth chapter of the *Gītā* spirituality and materialism are described. The materialistic disposition is stated thus:

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च।
अज्ञानं च ॥ (XVI. 4.)

They are ostentation, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, insolence and ignorance. Avoiding these are considered to be the second principle in Self-surrender. It is said in the *Gītā* that the Supreme watches over His devotees' interest:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ (IX.22.)

Here the Lord assures to secure gain and safety to his devotees. To trust in this undertaking of the Supreme is the third principle of Self-surrender. Arjuna prays for His protection in the *Gītā*:

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान्।

न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ (XI. 43.)

प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥ (XI. 45.)

तस्मात् प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं
प्रसादये त्वामहमीशमीड्यम् ।
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः
प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव सोढुम् ॥ (XI 44.)

This prayer of Arjuna is considered as the fourth principle of surrender. Arjuna's helplessness is found in his saying as:

दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म । (XI. 25.)

न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् । (XI. 31.)

That the instruction of the *Gītā* is concluded with Self-surrender is already explained as सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य, etc.

Thus Keśava Kāśmīribhaṭṭa has explained the principle of surrender as the central teaching of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

The five things that are explained by Nimbārka in the tenth *śloka* of his *Daśaślokī* also can be the central teaching of the *Gītā* according to Keśava Kāśmīribhaṭṭa. The nature of Vāsudeva to be worshipped is explained in the *Gītā* as the omniscient and ultimate cause of the whole universe :—

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥ (IV. 5.)

अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा । (VII. 6.)

मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते । (X. 8.)

The features of the *Jīva*, the aspirant, are also explained as :

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूत: सनातन: ॥ (XV. 7.)

Further the embodied self is said to cast off worn out bodies and to enter others which are new just as a man casts off worn out clothes and puts on others which are new :

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा-
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ (II. 22.)

The changelessness of the *jīva's* character is said:

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावक: ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुत: ॥
अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च । (II.23, 24.)

The result of the grace of the Supreme is also expressed here and there in the *Gītā* as :

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ (VII.14.)

य: प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशय: ॥ (VIII.5.)
स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ (VIII.10.)

Bhakti-rasa is seen explained in the *Gītā* where Lord Śrīkṛṣṇa speaks about the four classes of devotees' the distressed; the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the wise man. Of these the *jñānin* is also extolled :

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त: एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रिय: ॥ (VII.17.)

V. ANJANEYA SARMA

VALLABHA ON THE GĪTĀ

Born as a gift of Providence to his parents[1] (in the 15th century A.D.), Śrī Vallabhācārya also known as Vallabha Dīkṣita preached the doctrine of Divine Grace (*Puṣṭi*). Brahmavāda and Śuddhādvaita are the other names of his philosophy which, while containing the seeds of pure emotionalism that characterizes the later Vaiṣṇava movement of India as propagated by Caitanya and others, is marked by a spirit of universalism attempting to reconcile various theories and practices. That with Indians philosophy and religion are identical is proved once again in the life and teachings of Vallabha. A man of deep philosophic insight and conviction strengthened by his wide learning and travel throughout the country, Vallabha shows in his works a comprehensive and wholesome approach to philosophy which is altogether free from the dialectic aggressiveness of a passionate debater. As his concept of Divine Grace knows no barriers of caste or sex and grants freedom to one and all (*sarvamukti*),[2] so his idea of Puruṣottama is free from the exclusive partialities for hypotheses which in other systems have invited vehement criticism. This is amply evidenced by the least amount of hostility against Vallabha's philosophy, though it cannot be said that it was totally absent.[3] He is guided by practical neces-

---

1. *Sri Vallabhacharya* (by B.M.C. Parekh, Bhagavata Dharma Mission Series Vol. IV, Rajkot, 1943), pp. 2–4.

2. BG (*Bhagavad-Gītā* with eleven commentaries, Bombay, 1938), p. 18: Puruṣottama's *Amṛta-taraṅgiṇī* : इह खलु भगवान् पुरुषोत्तमः सर्वमुक्त्यर्थमवतीर्णः ॥

3. HIP [S.N. Dasguta's *A History of Indian Philosophy* Cambridge, 1949, Vol. IV, p. 377.

sity in interpreting his views. Though he calls himself a follower of Viṣṇusvāmin (who started what is known as the *Rudra-sampradāya*)[4] and is not the originator of the Śuddhādvaita, his contribution to this system is so prodigious that it is later named after him as the Vallabha-darśana, like Śaṅkara's Advita or Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita. As regards epistemology, all *pramāṇas*, except *anupalabdhi*, are accepted.[5] Verbal testimony produces only indirect knowledge[6] as in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. The Vedas, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are authoritative. Poetic literature and works like the *Vāsiṣṭharāmāyaṇa* are not valid sources of verbal knowledge.[7] The *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtra* crowned by the *Bhāgavata*[8] from the *prasthāna-traya* of Vallabha. The *Gītā* occupies the central place in this scheme that for the clarification of doubts arising in Vedas, the *Gītā* is to be consulted and the *Bhāgavata* elaborates what is expounded in it. "The *Gītā* is the

---

4. See the colophon of *Nibandha* (a popular name for Vallabha's *Tattvārtha-dīpa-nibhanda*) II : इति श्रीमद्वेदव्यासविष्णुस्वामिमतवर्तिवल्लभदीक्षितविरचिते भागवततत्त्वदीपे. . . .
HIP, Vol. IV, pp. 382–383.
Indian Philosophy (by S. Radhakrishnan, London, 1931) Vol. II pp. 661n and 756.

5. *Prasthāna-ratnākara* (by Puruṣottama, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 144, Banaras, 1909) p. 33 : श्रुतिः प्रत्यक्षमैतिह्यमनुमानंचतुष्टयम् ।
The *pramāṇas* other than *śruti* have only an empirical purpose and must be interpreted in harmony with the *śruti :*
प्रमाणगणना लोकव्यवहारप्रयोजना ।
ततः शब्दाविरुद्धा सादरणीयेति सूचितम् ॥

6. *Nibandha*, (with *prakāśa*, Bombay, 1905) I–61.

7. ibid. II 80 to 83. The works of Vālmikī and Vyāsa are composed in intuition (*samādhi-bhāṣā*), Systems like that of Kaṇāda are also included in the delusive literature.
(मोहार्थान्यन्यशास्त्राणि, see *Prakāśa* on it काणादादिशास्त्राणि)

8. AB (*Aṇu-bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-sūtra*, Banaras, 1907.)
III–iv–45 : भक्तिमार्गप्रचारैकहृदयो बादरायणः ।
मानं भागवतं तत्र तेनैवं ज्ञेयमुत्तमैः ॥

only scripture", declares Vallabha' "since it is sung by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself."[9] It is no exaggeration if this statement is described as the *Upaniṣad* of Vallabha. Yet it is a mysterious paradox that Vallabha who is credited with the authorship of more than eighty books should leave the *Gītā* without a commentary of his own. Perhaps he thought that his *Tattvārtha-dīpa-nibandha* and *Subodhinī* would answer the purpose, as the former gives a general survey of concepts of his system of thought with special reference to the *Gītā* and *Bhāgavata*, and the latter is a commentary on the famous Purāṇa which is itself an exposition of the *Gītā*. The available books on the *Gītā* in the Vallabha literature are two commentaries, the *Tattva-dīpikā* by another Vallabha and the *Amṛta-taraṅgiṇī* by Puruṣottama, one of the *śāstraic* writers on the system. A eulogistic poem, the *Bhagavad-Gītā-māhātmya* glorifying the scripture is attributed to Dayārāma.[10]

The authour of the *Tattva-dīpikā* dividing the *Gītā* into three equal sections says that the first one is like the *sūtras* and the second *vṛtti* and the third *bhāṣya*.[11] The author of *Amṛta-taraṅgiṇī* brings out the distinction of the Śuddhādvaita approach to the *Gītā* from that of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara missed an important point in holding *jñāna* alone as the means of *mokṣa*. What is this *jñāna*? It is caused by one of the *guṇas*, i.e., *sattva*, as the Gita says: सत्त्वात् संजायते ज्ञानम् । Similarly when *rajas* and *tamas* prevail over *sattva*, *jñāna* is destroyed and hence its efficacy is not absolute. So the means of *mokṣa* must be something different which is objective and everlasting.

---

9. *Nibaudha* I–4 : एकं शरणं देवकीपुत्रगीतमेको देवो देवकीपुत्र एव ।
मन्त्रोप्येकस्तस्य नामानि यानि कर्माप्येकं तस्य देवस्य सेवा ॥

and *Prakāśa* on it ; अत्राप्याख्यायिका पारम्पर्यादेवावगन्तव्या देवकीपुत्रेण गीतं गीता । गीतायां भगवद्वाक्यान्येव शास्त्रं इत्यर्थः । वेदानामपि तदुक्तप्रकारेणैवार्थनिर्णयः ।

10. *Sri Vallabhacharya*, p. 432.

11. BG p. 16 : प्रथमं सूत्रवत् षट्कं द्वितीयं चापि वृत्तिवत् ।
तृतीयं भाष्यरूपं हि स्वयं भगवतोच्यते ॥

This can only be the self-revealing of God; and it occurs through *Bhakti* (devotion) which is the main teaching of the *Gitā*.[12]

Since the concept of *Bhakti* involves the Supreme Self on the one hand and the individual selves in the world on the other, it is worthwhile to discuss the nature of God, soul and the world in Vallabha's system.

The highest principle is Puruṣottama who alone is worth realising. He has three aspects of *kāraṇa*, *kārya* and *svarūpa*. The world which is *kārya* is non-different from Him, the *kāraṇa* and so it is real. He is the *samavāyi-kāraṇa*[14] of the world, *samavāya* meaning identity. He has created it with his body of Existence (*sad-aṃśa*)[15] without any intermediary cause, i.e., *Māyā*. This is one of the points in Vallabha's thought

---

12. ibid. pp. 17–18: तत्र गीताशास्त्रं किं परमिति विचार्यते तत्र शंकराचार्याः.... परमार्थतत्त्वं वासुदेवाख्यं च परं ब्रह्माभिधेयं साध्यभूतं विशेषतोऽभिव्यञ्जयद् विशिष्टप्रयोजनसंबन्धाभिधेयवद् गीताशास्त्रमित्यूचुः। तेन तन्मते आत्मज्ञान-निष्ठारूपाद् विद्यात्मकाद् धर्मादुक्तरूपो मोक्षो भवतीति सिध्यति। तत्र विद्या सात्त्विकी अविद्या राजसतामसी। सत्त्वरजस्तमसां च परस्पराभिभावकत्वं "रजस्त-मश्चाभिभूय" (गीता XIV – 10) इति वक्ष्यमाणवाक्यात्। अतो रजस्तमः क्रियमाणाभिभवनिवृत्त्यर्थं गुणत्रयनिवारकं साधनान्तरमन्वेष्टव्यं भगवत्प्राप्तिरूपं – तद्यत्र नोक्तमतोऽन्यूनमित्यवगन्तव्यम्।....शरणगमनस्यैवोपदेशात्। न ज्ञाने वा सन्न्यासे वा तात्पर्यमिति दिक्॥

So the philosophy of the *Gītā* with Vallabha's system, is the philosophy of taking refuge in the Lord. The ceremonial initiation into the Vallabha Order consists of शरणमन्त्रोपदेश (श्रीकृष्णः शरणं मम is the *mantra*) and आत्मनिवेदन or self-surrender.

13. BG XI-3; XV–16 to 19. and p. 351: प्रमेयः पुरुषोत्तमः on XII-1. *Nibandha* II–84: प्रमेयं हरिरेवैकः।
    II-85: ....कारणेन च कार्येण स्वरूपेण विशेषतः।

14. ibid. I–23: प्रपंचो भगवत्कार्यः
    I–68: जगतः समवायि स्यात्तदेव च निमित्तकम्।

15. ibid. I–28: ....सदंशेन जडा अपि।

which distinguishes it as Brahma-vāda from Śaṅkara's Advaita which is libelled as Māyā-vāda. Also the theories of creation in other systems like the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Buddhism are disproved. Puruṣottama is capable of bringing every thing into being by His volition (*kṛti*).[16] Thus we see the functions of *Māyā* being transfered to Puruṣottama Himself. By achieving this *lāghava* (economy of thought) Vallabha has at the same time freed his system from the possible opposition which Śaṅkara's thought had to face. This inevitably made the Absolute a complex principle consisting of creative potentialities and contradictory properties, for Puruṣottama is both *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa*. This is His *svarūpa*.[17] Vallabha nowhere denies the existence of Pure Consciousness and in this he differs from writers like Rāmānuja who do not accept the existence of contradictions in Brahman either, which is invested with auspicious qualities. Vallabha declares that his conception of supreme Reality is more satisfactory because conciliatory. It is this complex truth that the *Gītā* teaches.[18] Puruṣottama (the Highest Man) is so called because He is higher than the *kṣara-puruṣa* (all the *jīvas*) and *akṣara-puruṣa* (the Cosmic Self), the bound and the free, the cause and the effect; while he assumes the forms of both.[19]

---

16. ibid. I–23 and *Prakāśa*: अयं प्रपंच: न प्राकृत: । नापि परमाणुजन्य: । नापि विवर्तात्मा । नाप्यदृष्टादिद्वारा जात: । नाप्यसत्त: सत्तारूप: किं तु भगवत्-कार्य: । परमकाष्ठापन्नवस्तुकृतिसाध्य: । तादृशोऽपि भगवद्रूप: ।

17. ibid. II–89: स्वरूपे तु त्रयो भेदा: क्रियाज्ञानविभेदत: ।
विशिष्टेन स्वरूपेण क्रियाज्ञानवतो हरे: ॥
II–84: ...सगुणो निर्गुणश्च स: ।
BG IX–19: XI–37.

18. *Nibandha* II–90: विशिष्टे वाचकं गीता श्रीभागवतमेव च ।

19. *Tattva-dīpikā* on BG XV–16:
तदेतत् स्वयं व्याचष्टे "क्षर: सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते" इति । सर्वाणि ब्रह्मादीनि स्तम्बपर्यन्तानि व्यष्टिभूतानि जीवशब्दाभिलपनीयानि भगवत्सदंशभूताचित्प्रकृति-संसृष्टानि....क्षर: पुरुष: । कूटस्थो मूलभूत: शुद्ध: सच्चिदानन्दक: भगवद्धामादिपद-वाच्योऽपि स महदादिषष्ठ:, कूटे भूतसमुदाये तिष्ठतीति वा.... (17) तदुत्तममाश्रय-भूतं मुख्यं स्वरूपमाह (तदधिदैवतम्) उत्तम: पुरुषस्त्वन्य इति ।.... अमितसच्चिदा-नन्दात्मा पुरुषोत्तम: सर्वकारणकारणभूत:.... तथा च पुराणि स्वप्रकृतिकार्याणि अवराणि, तत्संबन्धी क्षर: तदुत्कृष्टोऽक्षरश्चराचरात्मा । तदुत्तम: पुरुषोत्तम इति व्युत्पत्ति: । तेन नित्यबद्धमुक्तपुरुषद्वयाद्विलक्षणता दर्शिता ।

The *jīvas* are to Brahman what the sparks are to the fire. The image is suggested in the eleventh chapter of the *Gītā*. The nature of relation between the two is termed *kārya-kāraṇa-bhāva* and *aṃśāṃśi-bhāva*. The *jīva* is atomic in size and forms part of Brahman. The *cit* aspect of Brahman who is *sat-cid-ānanda-svarūpa* predominates in him.[20] Śuddhādvaita is also interpreted to mean the union between the two *śuddhas*, i.e., the *jīva* and the *Brahman*,[21] the former entering into the being of the latter (*praveśātmaka-sāyujya*). The individual selves fall into three classes according to the way of life they lead :[22] (1) the *pravāha-jīvas* or those who represent the *sad-aṃśa* of the Lord and who are given to the worldly life (*pravāha*). *Pravāha* signifies that they are drifted like a straw in a flood hither and thither at random as God pleases. These are those whom the *Gītā* calls the *āsuras* in contrast with the *daivas*; (2) the *maryādā-jīvas* or those who represent the *cid-aṃśa* and who are guided by the Vedic teachings (*maryādā*); and (3) the *puṣṭi-jīvas* or those who have given themselves upto Lord's Grace (*puṣṭi*). This concept of *puṣṭi* is the keynote of Vallabha's philosophy. It is the highest state of devotion to the Lord in which the *sādhaka* resigns himself to the dicates of God's will and Grace consciously

---

20. *Nibhandha* I–27 to 28: ब्रह्मभूतांशचेतना:
Tattva-dīpikā XIII–17
HIP Vol. IV p. 332n.

That the *Jīva* is atomic is one of the reasons why the commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* is called *Aṇu-bhāṣya*.

See *Sri Vallabhacharya*, p. 174.

Also see *Brahma-sūtra*, III–iii–19f and 43f for the concept of *aṃśāṃśi-bhāva*.

22. Sanskrit Introducton to the *Brahmavāda-saṃgraha* (of Hariraya, Kasi Sanskrit Series, 61 Banaras 1928) pp. 1 to 5.

The word is technically defined: "इतरसंबन्धानवच्छिन्तकार्यकारणादिरूपद्वित्वप्रकारकज्ञानप्रतियोगिताकाभावत्वम्" (शुद्धाद्वैतम्)

Giridhara's *Śuddhādvaita-mārtaṇḍa* (Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 97 Banaras 1906) st. 27 and 28: अद्वैतं शुद्धयो: प्राहु: ....मायासंबन्धरहितं शुद्धमित्युच्यते बुधै: ।

The *Maṇḍalabrāhmaṇa-Upaniṣad*, II–7 and 9 mentions the word *Śuddhādvaita*.

22. The *Puṣṭi-pravāha-maryādā* (by Vallabha, Bombay 1928) st. 3 and 9.

and whole-heartedly, where the welfare of the aspirant is looked after by Him. This is echoed in the *Gītā*.[23] Disinterested service and love for God lead to *puṣṭi*. This is the spirit of the *Gītā* teaching which has made the scripture at once universal in its appeal and the most significant in the history Indian religion and philosophy. "......... the special feature of the *Gītā* is that it tends to make all actions non-moral by cutting away the bonds that connect the action with its performer."[24] The message of the *Gītā* that one should try to rise above the realm of the three *guṇas* and approximate oneself to the highest Being, Puruṣottama is the mainspring of Vallabha's doctrine.

The means of *jñāna* and *karma* are also other spiritual paths leading to their respective goals. The path of *Bhakti* may include any of them as subordinate means. In the Śuddhādvaita the means is also *śuddha* and this is *Bhakti* independent, pure and simple, and indescribable (*Nibandha* II-196, भक्ति: स्वतन्त्रा शुद्धा च दुर्लभेति न सोच्यते । एषा भक्तिर्माहात्म्यज्ञानपूर्वकपरमस्नेहरूपा । तथाभूता सती भगवत्परिचर्यायुक्ता भवेत्···· सा भक्ति: स्वतन्त्वेत्युच्यते । तां सामान्यतो निरूप्य विशेषतो निरूपणाभावे हेतुमाह दुर्लभेति ।
Vallabha speaks of *jīvanmukti;* and for that matter his system never repudiates any concept that is solemn and sacred in any other school. But the goal of *puṣṭi-mārga* is higher than *jīvanmukti*. Further, even a released soul can have rebirth into this

---

23. BG IX-22: ....योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्
XVIII-66: अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि,

24. HIP, Vol. II p. 507 "In such circumstances", conitnues Dasgupta, "the more logical course would be that of Śaṅkara who would hold a man who is free from desires and attachments to be above morality, above duties and above responsibilities."

world if God wills.[25] In fact to lead a life of service and devotion to Lord here is higher than final liberation of 'no return'. The Vallabha commentators on the *Gītā* are silent on the passage in the fifteenth chapter which speaks of this 'no return'. The relation between the devotee and his deity is described figuratively as one of the insect and the bee, *kīṭa-bhṛṅga-nyāya*.[26] It can also be compared to that of a cat's cub and its mother, *mārjāraśiśu-nyāya*. For similarly, there is no self-effort on the part of the devotee who like a machine requires the touch of God even for the slightest movement. The *Bhāgavata*[27] explains this *puṣṭi* as the Grace of the Lord among its ten-fold contents. This leads to *mukti* which is being *svarūpa*, namely the realisation that the individual is part of Brahman; and the Śuddhādvaitins describe it to be *prmeyabala-siddha*,[28] as the Advaitins hold *jñāna* to be *vastu-tantra* and not *puruṣa-tantra* or subjective in accordance with the *śruti*.[29] The ordinary perceptional process of

---

25. *Vidvan-maṇḍana* by Viṭṭhala, Banaras Sanskrit Series 149) p. 97: स्वावतारसमये क्रीडार्थं साक्षाद्योग्यास्त एव भवन्तीति तानप्यवतारयतीति पुनर्निर्गमयोग्यत्वम् । इदमेव मुक्तोपसृप्यव्यपदेशात् (Brahma-Sūtra I-3.2) इति सूत्रेणोक्तम् । Then how are the *Śrutis* speaking of 'No Return' to be reconciled ? It is replied thus: न च 'न स पुनरावर्तते' 'अनावृत्तिः शब्दा' दिति श्रुतिन्यायविरोधः । एतस्य प्रमाणमार्गपरत्वात् । इदं च पुष्टिमार्गंगीकारे भगवान् करोति । नोचेन्मर्यादायां प्रवेशपर्यन्तत्वमेव । तदुक्तं भगवान् भजतां मुकुन्दो भक्तिं ददाति कर्हिचित् स्म न भक्तियोगमिति । किं च संसारे पुनः अनावृत्तिमाह श्रुतिः । नहि तेषां तत्संसारः । मुक्ता अपि लीलाविग्रहं कृत्वा भजन्त इति वाक्याच्च । Also see *Brahma-sūtra* III-iii-32.

26. *Tattva-dīpikā*, IV-10: ...ज्ञानेन कीटभृंगन्यायेन ।

27. II-x-4: पोषणं तदनुग्रहः ।
II-x-6: मुक्तिर्हित्वान्यथारूपं स्वरूपेण व्यवस्थितिः ।

28. AB III-iii-29: स्वरूपबलेन स्वप्रमाणं पुष्टिरुच्यते ।
Tattva-dīpikā, XII-1: प्रमेयरूपा तद्भक्तिः प्रमेयः पुरुषोत्तमः अतः प्रमेयमार्गे तु हरिः सेव्यो न चापरः ।

29. *Muṇḍaka-Up*. III-ii-3: यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः ।

sense-contact with the object does not hold good here.[30] On the other hand, "The principle followed in perception is analogous to the cosmic appearence of Brahman as manifold, in which the pure Brahman by His will and thought shows Himself as many, though He remains in Himself all the time..."[31]

As for the status of the world[32] in the Śuddhādvaita, it is a real and direct effect of the Supreme. It is subject to *āvirbhāva* and *tirobhāva* according to God's will. When He wants to rejoice in the company of a second entity He causes the universe and when He wants to enjoy loneliness He withdraws it into Himself. According to the Vedas there is no intermediary cause in between the world and the Supreme Lord, such as *Māyā*. This is another distinction of Śuddhādvaita from the Advaita. But Vallabha is not blind to the existence of *Māyā*. It is the *Śakti* of the Lord. The Purāṇas and the Vaiṣṇava thought, he says, accept this additional cause of creation. They do so in order to bring home to us the awe-inspiring greatness of the

30. The *Prasthāna-ratnākara* further elaborates the point on p. 137 भगवत्साक्षात्कारे तु नैषा प्रणाडी तस्य प्रमेयबलादेव भवनात् ।

But when the Lord takes incarnations He can be visualised as an object of perception and in many ways – But in either case the realisation occurs only on His own accord.

31. HIP. Vol. IV p. 338.

32. See note 13 and 16.

Nibandha I–23 and *Prakāśa* 'स वै नैव रेमे' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Up.* I–iv–3) इत्यादिश्रुतिभ्यो रमणार्थमेव प्रपंचरूपेणाविर्भावात्... श्रुतितो हि प्रपंचस्य ब्रह्मतोच्यते तस्य नित्यत्वादाविर्भावतिरोभावावुच्येते ।

Also *Nibandha* I–24 : कृष्णस्यात्मरतौ त्वस्य लयः सर्वसुखावहः ।

Brahman becomes the bodies and senses and so the world is not *mithyā*, I–79: 'सत्यं चानृतं च सत्यमभवत्' (तैत्ति. उ. 2–6) इति ब्रह्मण एव देहेन्द्रियादिरूपत्वं.... नत्वत्र मिथ्यात्वं वक्तुं शक्यते ।

This is the view of the Vedas as well. वैदिकस्तावदेतावानेव सिद्धान्तः । वैष्णवानुसारेण किंचित्साधनमधिकमाह 'माययाभवदि'ति (I–23).

It is only in the Purāṇas that *Māyā* is admitted, I–82 : यन्मायिकत्वकथनं पुराणेषु प्रदृश्यते.... नास्ति श्रुतिषु तद्वार्ता ।

Māyā is Lord's potency I–23 – I–89 : मायिकत्वं पुराणेषु वैराग्यार्थमुदीर्यते ।

Lord (*māhātmya*) and detachment (*vairāgya*). The awareness of His *māhātmya* excites *Bhakti.* But Brahman is capable of creating directly and independently of *Māyā* also. The world is the *kārya*-aspect of Him. It is one with Him as the *jīva* is one with Brahman in the Advaita. But Vallabha makes an important distinction between *prapañca* and *saṃsāra*[33] which are apparently identical in Śaṅkara's Advaita, and has thus immuned himself from the lethal criticism which the latter has survived. The world is real as the manifestation of the Lord, while *saṃsāra* is caused by *avidyā*. It is destroyed when the *jīva* is liberated. But the reality of the world is open to objection: The *śrutis* say that the effect is a mere name and the cause alone is real; and the world-view of Vallabha goes against the Vedas. To this Vallabha replies that such passages convey only identity between the cause and the effect which is in perfect keeping with Śuddhādvaita. If the illusoriness (*mithyātva*) of the world were intended, it would have been specifically stated. Illusionism is criticised by Vallabha as fraudulent [34]

Though Vallabha agrees with the other Vaiṣṇava schools in the admission of *Bhakti* as the main means of *mokṣa*, he differs from them in making it objective (*prameyarūpa*). He has gone also a step further in conceiving of Brahman as the meeting-place of opposites which is in keeping with the spirit of the *Gītā* and in making his system dialectically less objectionable (*Nibandha*, 1–70: सर्ववादानवसरं नानावादानुरोधि तत् ।).

---

33. *Nibandha* I–24 : संसारस्य लयो मुक्तौ न प्रपंचस्य कर्हिचित् ।

But the Advaitins also mean only *samsāra* or individual's worldly attachments by the word *prapañca* and not the physical phenomenon. However it is a fact that the absence of distinction between the expressions was taken advantage of by the opponents. Vallabha's conception of *saṃsāra* is the same as the *adhyāsa* of Advaita.

Nibandha I–23 : स च अहंताममतात्मकोऽविद्यया क्रियते ।

Śaṅkara's *Adhyāsa-bhāṣya* on the *Brahma-sūtra* I–i–1: अहमिदं ममेदमिति नैसर्गिकोऽयं लोकव्यवहारः ।

34. *Nibandha* I–83 : वाचारम्भणवाक्यानि तदनन्यत्वबोधनात् ।
न मिथ्यात्वाय कल्पन्ते जगतोऽध्यासगौरवात् ॥

Seeing that the logical explanations of the relation between the appearance and reality in Advaita are unsatisfactory Vallabha tried to improve upon Śaṅkara's thought by rejecting *Māyā* altogether and making the appearance a real manifestation of the Absolute. But the result is that Vallabha's system became pluralistic instead of remaining absolutist, an antithesis of the Śuddhādvaita !

As regards the interpretation of the *Gītā* according to Vallabha's thought, it is necessary to understand what the scripture teaches in itself. An impartial perusal reveals that it never propounds any single theory to the exclusion of others. It is an encyclopaedia of various religious faiths of India *(yoga-śāstra)* If it does not exhaust all of them, there is no other book in Sanskrit which deals with more. It extols each path as the best one and most acceptable to the Lord.[35] One of the greatest tenets it teaches is religious toleration (II-48 : समत्वं योग उच्यते ।) which India practised down the ages.

In the first place, the *Gītā* deals with as many paths as its chapters. Even *viṣāda*, melancholy is a path. For that is the first step in any faith. Every tear becomes a tutor. Secondly, during the course of the text are given other paths like the *Yoga*, the *Brahma-yoga*, the *Buddhi-yoga*, the *Abhyāsa-yoga*, the *Ananya-yoga*, etc.[36] Thirdly, some other paths are described and defined without being named, such as the *Yajña-yoga*.[37] With a truly motherly attitude the *Gītā* never condemns one method in preference to another. But we find every commentary on the *Gītā* to whatever school it may belong, old or new, trying to adapt it to its own preconceptions. It is perhaps that because the *Gītā* is too broad-minded for any school of crystallization, Vallabha did not think of commenting on it. But the Vallabha philosophy

35. BG IV-11 : ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम ।

36. ibid. II-39, 53: *Yoga* itself is mentioned as a path; it is different from the one associated with the *Sāṅkhya*. II-49; XVIII-57 : *Buddhi-yoga* ; V-21 : *Brahma-Yoga* ; XII-6 : *Ananya-yoga* ; XII-11 : *Abhyāsa-yoga* ; IX-28 : *sannyāsa-yoga*.

37. BG IV-23 to 33.

alone appears to breathe faintly the tolerant spirit of the *Gītā*[38] under the weight of its predilections to *Bhakti*. However, an exposition which can do full justice to the scripture by bringing out this true meaning is yet awaited.

38. *Tattva-dīpikā*, III-3: ये तु सांख्यास्तेषां ज्ञानयोगेन सर्वत्यागरूपा स्थितिरुक्ता। ये चोक्तयोगाधिकारिणस्तेषामुक्तविधकर्मयोगेनेति। स्वस्वाधिकारानुसारेणैव सर्वं योग्यमिति न बुद्धिव्यामोहः कार्यः। अधिकारिभेदस्तु सर्वाभिमतोऽत एव क्वचिज्ज्ञानं क्वचिद्भक्तिरिति स्वतः पुरुषार्थहेतवः। एवं मोक्षोपायाः योगो ज्ञानं च भक्तिश्च इत्युक्ताः।

AB p. 1164: मुक्तिफलकत्वं हि सर्वेषामुपासनानामविशिष्टम्।

G. MARULASIDDAIAH

THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ AND VĪRAŚAIVISM

The greatness of the *Gītā* as distinguished from the theistic *Bhāgavata* need not be over-emphasised. Because of its synthetic stress on all aspects of *Dharma* (ethics, religions, philosophies, etc.) it is ecliptic and affords ample opportunity for any interpretation from any quarter. An earnest endeavour to revise and revitalise the already lost Vedic values emphasising more 'on *pravṛtti*[1] than *nivṛtti*' and to recommend a universal religion where a synthesis of *jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti* are imbibed in their proper perspective and practised, seems to be the total import of this *Gītā*, the Soldier-Sermon to fight against evil.

'The object of the *Gītā* is to discover a golden means between the two ideals of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* or of action and contemplation...'

'The prestine spring of the eternal Vedas had almost dried up in the rising sands of cults and barriers. The spirit of universal religion and philosophy was practically beyond the purview of popular minds who were confined to conventional forms, ritual and conduct.'[2]

Revitalisation of the pre-Vedic Śaivism and Vīraśaivism and establishment of firm foundation on ethical and rational basis is also the be-all and end-all of Vīraśaivism, popularly known as the *Ṣaṭsthala Siddhānta*; an off-shoot[3] of the Vedic and Agamic[4] branches of Śaivism :

'Saivism is one of the living religions. It has a very large following even today and its history goes back to the time of the Indus Valley Culture and Civilizations.'

1. M. Hiriyanna: *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*. George Allen and Unwin, London. p. 120.
2. K. Krishnamoorthy : '*Gītā and Basaveśvara*'. *Basaveśvara Commemoration Volume*. p. 101.
3. See K.C. Pandey : *Bhāskarī*, Vol. III, pp. 2, 3, 163. Lucknow, 1954.
4. S.C. Nandimath : *A Handbook of Veeraśaivism*. Dharwar, 1942, p. 3.

'Vīraśaivism draws inspiration from the schools of Śaivism current in South India. The Śaivasiddhānta that first took shape in Tamil Nadu several centuries ago was later considerably influenced by Kashmir and Gauḍa Śaivism."[5]

The Śaivāgamas which inculcate the doctrine are believed by the Liṅgāyats (Vīraśaivas) to be coeval with and complementary to the Vedas themselves.

The schools of Vīraśaivas, viz., the orthodox and the reformed one are discernible, the orthodox preferring to be called as 'Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita',[6] the origin and development of which is traceable only from the 11th c.A.D. and onwards. The Liṅga-cult has its origin along with the *sālagrāma* or any other sacred symbol common to other cults.

Treatises in Kannada, Sanskrit and English elaborate in their own scientific style the chief tenets of the system.[7] But the

5. S.D. Pavate: *Veeraśaiva Philosophy of the Śaivāgamas*, p. 2n.

6. The term is coined on the lines of other systems like Dvaita, Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita. Since Viśiṣṭādvaita agrees and also disagrees with these systems, it is in vogue in the orthodox Vīraśaiva works.

7. Only the important works are mentioned:

SANSKRIT:
1. *Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi* of Śivayogiśivācārya (11 c. A.D.)
2. *Kriyāsāra* of Nīlakaṇṭha (14 c.A.D.) a work in *kārikās* on an unavailable *bhāṣya* of Śrīkaṇṭha on *Brahmasūtra.*
3. *Śrīkarabhāṣya* or *Brahmamīmāṁsābhāṣyā* of Śrīpatipaṇḍita (1160 A.D.) a commentary according to Vīraśaivism on Bādarāyaṇa-Brahmasūtras.
4. *Anubhāvasūtra* (in *kārikās*) by Mogge Māyideva (1430 A.D.)
5. *Vīraśaivānanda-candrikā* by Maritoṇṭadārya (17 C. A. D.), etc.

ENGLISH:
6. K.C. Pandey: *Bhāskarī*, Vol. III, Lucknow, 1954.
7. S. C. Nandimath: *A Handbook of Veeraśaivism*, Dharwar, 1942.
8. S.D. Pavate: *Veeraśaiva Philosophy of the Śaivāgamas.*
9. HH. Kumāraswāmigalu: *Veeraśaiva Mysticism*, etc.
10. Commemoration Volumes, Karnatak University, Dharwar.

KANNADA:
11. C.C. Basavanala: *Veeraśaiva Tattvaprakāśa*, 1952.
12. Hardekar Manjappa: *Vacanas and Comments.*
13. G.G. Halakatti: *Vacanaśāstra* (Ed), etc.
14. *Basavapurāṇa* by Basavaradhya, Kanchi.

Other works by poets like Harihara, Chamarasa, Raghavanka, are also to be seen.

Vacanaśāstra heralded by Basava the Saint-Statesman under Bijjala, the Kalacuriya (Cālukya) king of 1163 A.D. and his band (*śaraṇas*) like Prabhudeva, Cannabasavaṇṇa, Akka Mahādevī, and a host of other *śaraṇas*, outweighs the traditional Viśiṣṭādvaita which, in fact, is imitative of the time-honoured priestly hierarchy and hence opinion still stands divided. Under the old common rudiments and the new spirit of the *Ṣaṭsthala*,[8] *Pañcācāra*,[9] and other metaphysical[10] network the system prevails.

Since an understanding of the background of the system is essential for comparing it with the contents of the *Gītā*, a brief survey of the same is introduced. Now we will pass on for comparing both the schools instead of only Śaktiviśiṣṭa.[11] We prefer here to name the system 'Vacana-Vīraśaiva'.

Nature and Scope:

Excluding details that creep in because of the heterogeneous character of the epic, the message of the *Gītā*, in essence, agrees with the chief tenets of Vīraśaivism. Barring the liturgical, ritualistic and priestly hierarchy, both agree in spirit, upon the strict emphasis on *dharma*, the universal brotherhood, the merit irrespective of birth, and above all the top priority to *karmayoga* in preference to *jñānayoga*. Importance to ethics

8. (1) *Bhakta*, (2) *Maheśa*, (3) *Prasādi*, (4) *Prāṇaliṅgi*, (5) *Śaraṇa* and (6) *Aikya*.

9. (1) *Liṅgācāra*, (2) *Sadācāra*, (3) *Śivācāra*, (4) *Gaṇācāra* and (5) *Bhṛtyācāra*.

10. The Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika metaphysical background is formed here. The 25 elements (gross and minute) and their mutations and permutations leading to 101 states or 136 stages mark the ontology. The commonly believed view is that the Sāṃkhyas and Vaiśeṣikas are the earliest in the line. But K.C. Pandey (PWSB Texts. Lucknow, 1954) in his *Bhāskarī* p. iii. (Introduction) opines that, the Śaiva metaphysics is earlier than Sāṃkhyas and Vaiśeṣikas (*Aulūkya Darśana*).

11. *Śaktiśca (cit) Śaktiśca (acit) Śaktī. Tābhyām viśiṣṭau Śiva-jīvau. Tayoradvaitam Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaitam.* See article, in Kannada by M S. Basavalingaiah in *Veeraśaivatattvaprakāśa*, p. 176 (1941).

and relegation[12] of philosophy to backgrounds are noteworthy in both.

The most important *karmayoga* has its equally important counterpart '*kāyaka*', the eternal message of the Vacana-Vīraśaiva. *Kāyaka* instists work as worship and righteousness forms the edifice of *kāyaka*. The individual must submit himself to action for elevation of himself and society, unmindful of result. A high sense of duty is imposed on the individual whatever his station or status be :

'*Kāyaka* is compulsory. Be he a *guru*, *liṅga*, or *jaṅgama*.'
'Engaged in *kāyaka* one should ignore *guru* or *liṅga*'

S ys Basava :

'*kāyakadalli niratanādoḍe, gurudarśanavadayya mareyalekku.........kāyakave kailāsa.*'

The most important result of this was not only ethical or philosophical but also social. It rid the society of parasites. Doing valuable and voluntary duty was an end in itself and never a means to any other mundane end. A self-sufficient economy is not a negligible result which made the Vīraśaivas independent and also interdependent in those days without the tales of woe that we witness today. A cobbler, a washerman, a pariah, a fisherman, a hawker, a bamboo-knitter, etc., men and women of the fold were all on a par. The *Anubhava Maṇṭapa* or a centre of philosophical discourse was run by all without any formal teacher or taught. Doubts if any were discussed

12. "To regard a consideration of ultimate philosophical question as falling within the main aim of the *Gītā* appears to us to misjudge its character...... they form only the background to ethical teaching......"
— M. Hiriyanna, *op. cit.* p. 117.

Self-styled greatness and mutual admiration of today is stunned by Vīraśaivism and the *Gītā*. The proof of piety is direct dealing with the ultimate. Basava challenges : '*Liṅgava nuḍisimbho*', Speak to Liṅga (if you are really men worth the designation). Hence Vīraśaivas cared very little for verbal speculation of values, but the proof of pudding is in eating. Eschewing artificial social incquities, broad outlook to common good, pious conduct and such are enforced more than monism or dualism or quantified monism of unknown Being by the unsound being.

openly and decided. All rallied round the faith with perfect equality, fraternity and liberty. Here would one recollect the *Gītā* :

"*Mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātmacetasā.* III.30.
Kuru karma... pūrvam pūrvataraiḥ kṛtam. IV.15.
Karmaṇyevādhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana. II 47.
Yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi II–48
karma muktasaṅgaḥ samācara. III 9.

The high sense of *svadharma* is self imposed and self-elevating. It is astonishing to note that *mokṣa*, liberation or *Bayalu* is taken as control over laws of Nature and bondage is control by laws of Nature. An anecdote that a *śaraṇa* invited by Śiva refused to go to Kailāsa is interesting, as he preferred '*karmabhūmi*' to some '*marmabhumi*'

'Duty bound I do my duty. I know you grant me the result'.

'*Nānu āraṁbhava māḍuvenayya gurupūjegendu ;*
Ā karma phalabhogava nee koḍuveyendu.'
Basava-vacana : 662

'He who offers himself to Lord with *karmaphala* is lucky.'
— *ibid.*, 651.

The great service rendered by the Vacana-Vīraśaivas in eradicating religious and social taboos and inhibitions is reverberated in the *Gītā*. To break through the impregnable social barriers is no ordinary joke.

Dealing with iron one is blacksmith
A Cobbler by stiching leather .....
A Washerman by washing clothes
A Brahmin by reading Vedic chants
What makes the so-called caste or community.
He who strives for common good in His name
Is the only religious.

Endorsing dismissal of such artificial social distinction and upholding *bhakta* to others, the *Gītā* declares :

'Yo yo yāṁ yāṁ tanuṁ bhaktaḥ śraddhayārcitum icchati
tasya tasyācalāṁ śraddhāṁ tāmeva vidadhāmyaham' VII. 21.
'Ye' pyanyadevatābhaktāḥ yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te'pi māmeva kaunteya yajantyavidhipūrvakam' IX. 23.

A high sense of toleration and religious equality on the basis of conduct is the common feature underlying both. Even the nature and scope of both (God and devotee) agree, as Ṣaḍakṣarī puts it :

'Ye yathā mām prapadyante tāṃs tathaiva bhajāmy aham' IV.11.
'Avaravara daruśanake, avaravara bhāvakke......'

'Returned are abuses and beatings to abuses and beatings result of His worship is also paid in the same coin by Him then and there according to their devotion.'

Such a high sense of toleration, liberty and equality is common to both and, the Vacanakāras go even a step further by challenging God to test them as he pleases. Basava pins down the atrocities committed by the so-called high priests, proud only of their birth and having no worth whatsoever and cares not for the consequences. *Śraddhā* and *bhakti*, duty and devotion without forgetting *laukikācāra* is the special practice of the *śaraṇa.* Details in this regard are too many and the reader is invited to the *vacanas.* Atrocity in the name of the Veda is condemned without prejudice to high regard for and reliance on the Veda, and the same view is endorsed by the *Gītā.*

'Yāvān artha udapāne sarvataḥ samplutodake
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ' II.40.

'Gītavanodidāta jāṇanalla ; vedaśāstravanodidāta jāṇanalla'

'An expert in the Veda or the *Gītā* is not a sound philosopher.'

'Auction your Ādipurāṇas to *asuras* and Vedapurāṇas to goats and sheep No match is there to our Kūḍalasaṅga's purāṇas.'

The stand taken by Basava and others was fire ordeal. They too, like all reformers, faced consequences. But the

ethical, social and religious awakening or reformation they boldly gave effect to, silencing vested interest, is not even imagined by the *Gītā*, as it was beyond its scope.

The point remains clarified that the Vacana-Vīraśaiva and the *Gītā* achieved the same restorat on of the lost Vedic values and Vīraśaivas were never *avaidika* or anti-*vaidika* as our so-called priests would hastily put. The downtroddcn, the disabled men and women, the vast humanity victimised by censorship and superstitions were emancipated and educated by them on proper lines of real philosophy.

The *varṇāśrama* system which was also equally corrupt was reformed. Only two communities, duty-bound and duty - evaders were recognised, Illustrations of all details of parallelism between the *Gītā* and Vacanaśāstra could be given. It suffices to declare that a *Gītā*-atmosphere of righteousness, ethics, religion and philosophy with all its toleration, broadmindedness, equality and freedom to the individual without prejudice to one's own *Dharma* or duty is not at all missing in both. On time factors both must disagree in some points.

One may doubt that this is just an incredible attempt to equate both because the communal harmony was always a desideratum. Our answer to this is that the atmosphere of both must differ and our aim in this direction is test of minimum requirements. The grip that the *Gītā* is having and its everlasting impact on generations is also seen in *Vacanaśāstra*. Not that Vacanakāras were not aware of the *Gītā*. But custodians claimed the *Gītā* is sect.onal which view never bothered Vacanakāras. Basava hence remarks that a mere study of the *Gītā* is no passport to philosophical prcfection and informs that agreement of action and contemplation is always a pre-requisite for God's grace. If man is upto His values, He will be with you. Otherwise man presumes like children with toys. God is for blending of word and deed.

A word on variety in *Vacanaśāstra* may not be out of place in this august body of eminent scholars. A careful comparison of the *Gītā* and *Vacanaśāstra* would reveal that they

differ not only in ritualism, etc., as already referred to, but also in their philosophical or more appropriately in their measures of mysticism. If I am not mistaken to be sentimental, I wish to submit that a far advanced stage in mysticism we see in the *śaraṇas* and that is not very clear in the *Gītā*. It is the '*anubhava*' that matters much in such matters and it is not mere verbal jugglery that leads one to philosophical high-grounds. References to Allamaprabhu's *Yogasiddhi* as revealed in his enigmatic musings are said to be distinguished from others' experiences in the line. Hundreds and thousands of *śaraṇas* aim only at yogic perfection instead of entering into worldly controversies; social or philosophical Purtianism and rationale took them away from the common parlance of the world.

'Let me be one with you without being recognised' is the yearning of such saints. The keynote and kernel of Vīraśaivism is this undetected secret of those saints that their silent but successful march in the six stages (*Ṣaṭsthalas*) is not completely referred to by the *Gītākāra* and the end as referred to by both is not mere *mokṣa*. The term '*bayalu*' or 'void' is the special contribution of the Vīraśaivas. Terms like *guru*, *liṅga*, *jaṅgama*, *sthala*, *bayalu*, *dīkṣā*, *śivayoga*, *śivānubhava*, etc., have distinct connotations from their counterparts in other systems. But both agree on essentials. The soul, not the body, is the basis for evaluation.

Bhakti and *mukti* of the Vacanakāras vary in their meaning from the rest. A stage is attained where even the *summum bonum* '*liṅga*' (Brahma in attendance) is ignored as his unification with the Absolute is perfect

"Soaked with water it is never softened
Forget for years it is never dried up.
No use, No use of *liṅgapūja*.

Such a stand (*prāṇaliṅgasthala*) is nowhere anticipated by the *Gītā*. Even the theories like the *māyāvāda*, *adhyāsa*, *śakti*, *Dvaita*, *Advaita* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita* that are made much of by the orthodox Vīraśaivas are simply ignored or discarded by the *śaraṇas* in their *vacanas*.

'What do you do after mastering arguments on Dvaita and Advaita, unless like the lac to submerge in fire, you prepare for sublimation in Him, no use of any *śabda-sukha.*'

— *Basava-vacana* 29, p. 123 (GGH)

'By relying on *Tat-Tvam-Asi* you are engulfed in darkness.'

Calling liberation by the significant term '*śūnya*' they conceive relationship of the *jīva* with Śiva (*liṅga*) as something similar to that between fire and lac or a steel and magnet '*loha-parusayoga*' for Śivayoga. Concepts like *Bheda*, *Abheda*, *Bhedābheda*, *Śivādvaita*, *Anubhavādvaita*, *Viśiṣṭabheda*, *Śuddhādvaita*, etc., and even the *Śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita* have no serious bearing at all on the *Śiva-śaraṇas*. As usual logic and licence are the two enemies of spiritual quest for truth. Basava and others knew all the *darśanas* including the Vaiśeṣika (*Vacana* No. 778; p. 112.) and they had good training in literature, philosophies and physical culture also.

Under such and other inexplicable[13] circumstances it is but fair to feel that the philosophical finale between the *Gītā* and *Śaraṇa-Gītā* is entirely a departure from the well established yogic tradition and each *Vīraśaiva-śaraṇa* has his own way of transmigration unknown or undetected by others. This may be common to all. But the fact goes established that the verbosity of the multitude in books and looks are not final and truth is individualistic like love and it holds good even in the field of philosophy or *ādhyātma.*

Thus the points of agreement and disagreement between the *Gītā* and Vīraśaivism are compared and contrasted in their main cross sections. All social reforms agree and the *ādhyātma* differs. Even the philosophical speculations are divergent.

---

13. "*Avyaktam vyaktimāpannam manyante mām abuddhayaḥ*" VII. 24.
(Kan) "*Vedanādātīta-turīya-paramānanda-niravayava*
Ṣaṭtriṃśat prabhāpaṭalada prabheya belagidu noḍire
Beḷaginoḷagaṇa mahābeḷagina beḷagu
Kūḍala Saṅgamadeva."

Asked by Mīmāṃsaka 'What proof is there for existence of God, I reply: *bhargo devasya dhīmahi*, and smash his nose with the sword *viśvataś cakṣu*......and cleaning the blood by means of a *Vaiśeṣika*-brick and then show him the mirror Kūḍala-saṅgama." (*Basavana-vacana* 778; p. 112. Ed. GGH).

To sum up, we may conclude that the *Gītā* and Vīraśaivism agree in dismissing man-made social barriers and the clarion call for a universal brotherhood is common to both. While the *Gītā* maintains ritualism the latter differs from it as ritualism leads to agency between man and God. The scriptural deviations of many 'isms' is not accepted by the Vīraśaivas, as the process of sublimation presupposes piety and not '*śabda-sukha*'. No recognised commentary on the *Gītā* according to Vīraśaivism is there and hence the author does not confine himself to any edifice but has expressed advanced views commonly accepted.

Both are advanced in thoughts and contribute profoundly to true democratic thoughts of true Hinduism.

P. SRIRAMA MURTI

THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ ACCORDING TO THE RADHASOAMIS

India is the blessed land of *ṛṣis*, *avatāras* and saints. The religious philosophies here are built upon the bases of the experiences and teachings of these great mystics. The classical systems of Advaita, Visiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita are based on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. These three texts are in the Sanskrit language. The Visiṣṭādvaitins, though belonging to an orthodox system, have given an equal status to the Pāñcarātrāgamas and the Alwar saints are regarded with as much respect as the Upaniṣadic *ṛṣis*. In Northern India there appeared a galaxy of great saints like Kabir, Nanak, Tulsi Sahab, Soamiji, Maharaj and other teachers of the Rādhāsoami faith. They gave their revelations in the local languages like Gurumukhi, and Hindi. They based their teachings entirely on their own personal experiences of Truth and their systems are built on the basis of these revelations only.

The Sikh religion, for instance, claims a higher status while the Rādhāsoamis hold that they have known the highest or the supreme Lord Himself. Though there exist such differences as regards the ultimate goal (*siddhāntapada*) of man and the highest status, much in common can be found between the classical Hindu religion (*sanātana dharma*) and *Religion of Saints*. The same imagery and mythologies are employed and as far as the teachings of the ancient *ṛṣis* and *avatāras* go there is no conflict between them and the Radhasoami faith. Therefore, in the writings of these saints, we have glimpses into the correct teachings of these ancient seers also. As these saints speak from the heights of supreme mystical experiences their interpretations are of the highest value to the real seekers of *paramārtha*.

Param Guru Huzur Sahabji Maharaj (Sir Anand Sarup Kt.) was the fifth revered leader of the Radhasoami Faith.[1]

1. For a detailed history of the Radhasoami Faith see Souvenir, Published by the Radhasoami Satsang Sabha, Dayalbagh, Agra-5, 1961, the centenary year.

He was born on Thursday, 6th August, 1881 in a middle class Sikh family of Ambala City. He passed Matriculation Examination in 1897 and could not continue his studies as he was quite absorbed in religious pursuit. He served in the Telegraph Department for sometime. Meanwhile he was keen on getting the *Darśana* of the supreme Lord and it was then that Parama Guru Maharaj Sahab, the third revered leader of the Radhasoami faith, gave him *Darśana* in a dream and guided him to Self-realisation. He served the fourth Guru Maharaj, Parama Guru Sarkar Sahab also, and succeeded him as leader of the faith in his 32nd year. The headquarters of *Satsang* were founded by him in Dayalbagh near Agra on 20th January, 1915. The object of the founding of Dayalbagh is explained as follows –

"Our idea is that the rise and fall of nations takes place as a result of the presence or absence of extra-ordinarily gifted souls and such souls take b rth only in communities and countries where they can get adequate facilities for carrying out their work. This is why we in Dayalbagh are making an attempt to maintain a pure spiritual atmosphere typical of India and simultaneously to provide freedom and facilities for work as are available in the west."[2]

Sahabji Maharaj was a versatile genius. His speeches and writings are 'master-pieces for originality of thought and broadness of vision.'[3] His speeches covered topics like, 'The National Problem of India'[4], 'Sorrows of Religion'[5], the 8th Convocation address of the Agra University on 23rd November, 1935[6]. His great work, however, is '*The Yathārtha Prakāśa*'[7], which is a unique study in comparative religion. The *Prem Bilas*

2. Souvenir pp. 189–190.
3. Dayalbagh, A pamphlet, Enlarged Edition, P. 15.
4. Lecture delivered in the Kayastha Pathasala Hall, Allahabad on 8-1-1935.
5. Address to the Allahabad University Union on 11-1-1935.
6. The 8th Convocation address of the Agra University, 23-11-1935. Also the address to the Scout Mela on 21st December, 1935. At Simla He spoke on "*How can we serve Hindu Raligion*".
7. *Yathārtha Prakāśa*, English Transletion, published by th · Radhasoami Satsang Sabha, Dayalbagh in 4 vols.

is a collection of beautiful devotional songs and *Din Va Duniyā*, *Samsār Cakra*, *Svarājya*, *Śaran Aśram Kā Sapūt*, are his dramas of the allegorical type, containing profound thought conveyed in the most pleasant manner possible. His discourses and his diary too contain several important religious teachings. Sahabji Maharaj was succeeded by Parama Guru Mohataji Maharaj in 1937 who is the present leader of the Radhasoami Faith.

In the years 1930-32, Sahabji Maharaj came across several seekers who were great lovers of the *Bhagavadgītā* and he had got thus an opportunity to explain certain *ślokas* of the text in great detail The exposition was found very illuminating by the listeners and they were fully satisfied by the explanation. Some of them had requested the Guru Maharaj to put his views in writing and in response Sahabji Maharaj wrote a Hindi translation of BG[8]. It is also believed by the great author that it would be useful to the followers of the Radhasoami faith also as they will get an opportunity to know the real teachings of the *Gītā*. The following is a humble account of his interpretation of the *Gītā* which is mainly based on the Hindi translation of Sahabji Maharaj.[9] Certain sections of his *Yathārtha Prakāśa* also contain his views on the *Gītā* and the personality of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.[10] His diary[11] and his other discourses also have flashes of insight on the various topics discussed in the *Gītā* and specific references to the text. All these are made use of in the preparation of the ensuing account.

BG is an ancient and important Hindu scripture forming part of the great epic *Mahābhārata* of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa; Though modern scholars have tried to show interpolations in the text, we can find a unitary teaching through thls great text. It is said that the *Gītā* was composed about two thousand five hundred years ago. Relatively speaking it belongs to a period between that of the *Upaniṣads* and the systematisation of the

8. *Bhagavadgita Ke Upadesh* by Sahabji Maharaj, Anand Sarup Sahab, Kt. Radhasoami Satsang Sabha, Dayalbagh, Agra, 1932.
9. Ibid.
10. *Yathārtha Prakāsh*, Eng. Translation Pr. III, Vol. ii, Pages 164-178.
11. His diary reproduced in Dayalbagh Herald, A Satsang weekly. 3-2-1970 P. 4.

darśanas of Sāṃkhya and Yoga Many technical terms are used here in an indefinite sense which later acquired definite connotations in the several philosophical systems. The worship of the Vedic deities and rituals are given a lower place and the devotion to the Lord is extolled which view is in consonance with that of the *Upaniṣads.* The *Gītā* was written at a time when the Hindu mind was quite liberal for it holds that the castes are determined according to one's propensities and actions unlike the *Manusmṛti* which says that the caste is determined by birth.

Gītā is written in an easy and lucid style. To present the most impressive and lofty teachings the author has chosen the mode of question and answer which indeed is most effective. Also the teachings are conveyed through the supreme personality of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna the great hero of the *Mahābhārata* war is chosen as the seeker.

The teachings of the *Gītā* are very clear and simple if approached with an open mind to get at the purport of the text according to the author. Each word speaks for itself. But it becomes very difficult and intricate when people try to read into it their own concepts and theories. Some scholars want to give metaphysical interpretation to the *Gītā* divesting it of all the natural situations and the personality of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They interpret Kurukṣetra war as the toil and turmoil of the world and Arjuna as the perplexed seeker. Duryodhana and his associates are explained as mind and senses. It is true that such an ingenious interpretation of the *Gītā* makes it a great religious discourse. But without the great personality of Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of *Parama puruṣa,* the seeker loses sight of central idea of the text. According to some others Lord Kṛṣṇa is still living and going about in the streets of Brindāvana and still others believe that they could derive spiritual benefit by worshipping his images. But it is very much regrettable to think so, because when a devotee like Arjuna who was a friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa from childhood could not get rid of the illusions of his mind until he had a direct experience (*viśvarūpadarśana*) of the Cosmic Form of the Lord, what could be the fate of those who are swayed by the dictates of the mind and senses, in regard to this ?

It is therefore wished that all those that are fond of the *Gītā* are engaged in devotion to the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa or the living *sadguru* and tread the path of devotion to attain the highest object of *paramārtha* successfully. In the religion of saints and the Radhasoami faith great emphasis is laid on the search for a living *sadguru* and devotion to him. Sahabji Maharaj says 'In my opinion, the basic teaching of the *Gītā* is that man should seek the Lord in human form and when he comes into contact with Him, he should act according to His orders. However, if one is not able to meet the Lord in human form, he should remember Him as best as he can and perform his duty.'[12]

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the incarnation of *Kālapuruṣa*, i e., the creative force of the supreme Being as is said in the *śloka* :

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत् प्रवृद्धो लोकान् समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥
(XI. 32.)

There are two aspects of the supreme Being, the creative force and the redeeming force. The creative force is known as *Kāla Aṅg*, while the redeeming force is called the *Dayāl Aṅg*. In the religion of saints, *Parama Puruṣa*, the supreme Being who rules over all the *Puruṣas*, has two characters, i. e., that of bringing the creation into existence and that of keeping aloof from the creation. The creative phase of the *Parama Puruṣa* on account of which innumerable *brahma puruṣas* and *brahmāṇḍas* came into existence and would continue till eternity, creating, sustaining and destroying the *brahmāṇḍas* is known as the *Kāla Aṅg*. All the *brahma puruṣas* who have been entrusted with the work of sustaining their respective *brahmāṇḍas* are known as *aṃśas* of *kālapuruṣa*. And as Lord Kṛṣṇa was the incarnation of an emanation of the creative phase of the supreme Being, He is known as the incarnation of the *Kālapuruṣa*.[13]

12. Ibid.
13. *Yathārthaprakāśa*, pt. III, Vol. ii, pp. 167–168.

According to Sahabji Maharaj the central teaching of the *Gītā* lies in the concluding section of the XVth Chapter. There are two forces at work in this creation, *kṣara* the perishable and *akṣara* the imperishable. All the objects of the world are perishable and the unchangeable Ātman is the imperishable. There is another *puruṣa* superior to both these forces who is all pervasive and the basis of all the three worlds. He is called the *Puruṣottama* and according to the author of the *Gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the incarnation of this *Puruṣottama* and the highest spiritual benefit consists in attaining Him.

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षरस्सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मेत्युदाहृतः ।
यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥

यो मामेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
स सर्वविद्भजति मां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।
एतद् बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान् स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ (XV. 16-20.)

The emphasis on the teaching contained in the XV 20 may be noted.

Again in the verses 64, 65 and 66 of the 18th Chapter devotion to the personality of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is taught in unequivocal terms.

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः श्रुणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढ इति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Here again the importance of the teaching is emphasised in XVIII. 64.

From time immemorial the belief in the Vedic ritualism possessed the minds of people and in later times the ideas of renunciation of *karmas* held sway and they used to swear by the teachings of Sāṃkhya. But the *Gītā* has a different teaching in this regard. According to the *Gītā* man can get the worldly benefits of rain, wealth, etc , through the propitiation of the gods by *yajñas* and those who worship the gods can also reach the regions of the gods, remain there for sometime and have to come back to this world, as a rule. And the Sāṃkhya provides for the attainment of the *kaivalya* state, i.e., aloofness of one's Self from the nature, thus getting release from the cycle of births and deaths. But by the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa one can attain the highest spiritual benefit. As regards the people who believe in renunciation it is said that it is impossible to renounce all actions. Man cannot live without doing any thing. It behoves therefore to engage himself in duties that are enjoined in the *Śāstras* for spiritual benefit. He must do them with all intent and faith but renouncing the desire for their fruit because real renunciation of actions consists in the renunciation of the fruits accruing therefrom.

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः । (III. 5.)

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन् कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ (III. 19.)

Arjuna is asked to go beyond the reach of the *guṇas* and therefore the Vedas are of little use to him in this regard. 'The subject matter of the Vedas is confined to the three *guṇas*, that is, the teaching of the Vedas pertains to the region within the limits of the three *guṇas*, viz., *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Oh, Arjuna, you go beyond the limit of the three *guṇas* and go beyond the region of *dvandvas* and achieve for yourself the everlasting state, be indifferent to what you have and what you should have and know the *ātman*.'

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतस्संप्लुतोदके ।
तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ (II. 45, 46.)

'All the Vedas are useful to a learned Brahman-realised holy person to the same extent as a small pit is in a place flooded with and full of water.' This means just as a small pit stands no comparison as against the sea, similarly the knowledge contained in all the Vedas is of no value to a person who has realised Brahman.

It is also made clear in the *Gītā* that the rituals are connected with the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and the highest spiritual state is beyond the reach of the three *guṇas*. To reach there, one has to take to the path of devotion. The Vedic rituals are ineffective for this purpose. The nature of the three *guṇas* is explained in great detail in BG. This creation has come into existence out of the *prakṛti* or the primordial matter. The *puruṣa* or the *ātman* is far removed from the *prakṛti*. The entire drama of creation is played by *prakṛti* only. An intelligent man, therefore, would try to get out of the reach of these three *guṇas* and attain oneness with the *Parama Puruṣa*.

It is not given to every man to tread the path of devotion. It requires a special kind of fitness on the part of the devotee.

A man should get his heart cleansed of love and hatred, and consider all states—good or evil, desirable or undesirable—as equal and bear pleasure and pain that befall him with equanimity and engage himself in the performance of his duties. This fitness cannot be attained by man without any effort. Therefore, it is advised that a seeker of *paramārtha* should do the necessary yogic practices to concentrate his mind and maintain equanimity.

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ (II 60, 61.)

'Close all the doors of the body i.e., the senses, restrain the mind within you, restrain your *prāṇa* within your forehead and concentrate your attention with the help of *yoga*. Whosoever leaves the human body, while repeating the word '*Om*' and meditating on me, attains highest status, i.e., the highest state of spirutuality.'

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ (VIII. 12, 13.)

The importance of *guru* in attaining *paramārtha* or spiritual uplift is explained in the following *ślokas*.

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाद् ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ (IV. 33.)

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ (IV. 34)

'O Arjuna, the *yajña* of knowledge is superior to other *yajñās* because the result of all the acts performed is knowledge. You should receive this knowledge from the *Guru* by falling at his feet i.e., by becoming a seeker and by serving him. The *Guru* who has realised the Truth (*tattvadarśin*) i.e. he who has realised *ātman* would teach you that knowledge.'

Also the *ślokas* 47 and 48 of the 11th Chapter speak of the superior position of true *guru* who is a Brahman-realised person.[14]

'O Arjuna, thou hast got the vision of my Form through My mercy. O Arjuna, Supreme among the Kauravas, none in this world can see this form of mine through the study of the Vedas, through *yajñas*, through studies, through charity, through good acts or through hard penance.

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमाद्यं यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥

न वेदयज्ञाध्ययनैर्न दानैर्न च क्रियाभिर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः ।
एवंरूपः शक्य अहं नृलोके द्रष्टुं त्वदन्येन कुरुप्रवीर ॥ (XI. 47, 48.)

14. It may be noticed here that this emphasis on *guru is* not alien to the spirit of the Upaniṣads and the orthodox philosophical systems. eg.
उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत ।
क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्गं पथस्तत्कवयो वदन्ति ॥
Kaṭhopaniṣad, I. 3.14.
दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद् देवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥ Śaṅkara's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, śloka 3.
See also *Manusmṛti*, II. 244.

Thus it may be noticed here that the teachings of the *Religion of Saints* and Lord Kṛṣṇa in regard to devotion of the *guru* are absolutely identical.[15]

In the following verses of the twelfth chapter, the path of *bhakti* of the highest order is taught and it is held to be superior to, and easiest of, all the methods.

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्पराः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामि न चिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ (XII. 5, 8.)

Hence He asks Arjuna to worship Him to attain the highest spiritual status.

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासात् ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात् कर्मफलत्यागः त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥

सन्तुष्टस्सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तस्स मे प्रियः ॥ (XII.12,14.)

It may be stated here that BG teaches the doctrine of *aṁśa* and *aṁśin* with respect to the relation of the individual spirit and the supreme Being which is also accepted in the religion of the saints.[16] Lord Kṛṣṇa has said:

---

15. *Discourses* (Delivered in *Satsang*) by His Holiness Sahabji's Maharaj Sri Anand Sarup Kt Part II, P. 198.
16. ibid. Part II, P. 188.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।
मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ (XV. 7.)

His own *aṁśa* comes as the immortal *jiva* in this world and attracts towards himself the senses, which exist in the universe. These senses include the mind called the sixth sense. This may be compared with the interpretation of the *Brahmasūtra*. II-3-43, by Śrī Rāmānuja.

अंशो नानाव्यपदेशादन्यथा चापि दाशकितवत्वादित्वमधीयत एके इति ॥

At the end of the preface to the translation it is said that the following *ślokas* of the *Gītā* are worth being written in golden letters, to be read time and again and installed in our hearts. They are :

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥
न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥
यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥
उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोकाः न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ (III. 21 - 24.)

This is in short a resume of the interpretation of BG by Sahabji Maharaj which represents the view of the religion of the saints of the Radhasoami faith.[17]

17. For a scientific exposition of the Radhasoami Faith, see *The Discourses on Radhasoami Faith*, by Param Guru Maharaj Sahab, the third revered leader of the Rodhasoami Faith, published by the Radhasoami Satsang Sabha, Dayalbhagh, Agra-5.

A.J. APPASAMY

THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ

Let us trace rapidly the course of theistic thought in the early religious literature of India. The polytheistic faith of the *Rig Veda* (1200 to 800 B.C.) had tended to develop in the direction of Monotheism. The god Varuṇa was endowed with moral qualities and stood out for a moment or two as if he would command the worship and allegiance of the religious people of India. But it was only for a moment or two. His interesting personality soon receded into the background.

In two of the Upaniṣads—namely, the *Kaṭha* and the *Svetāśvatara*—the theistic view received further development.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (500 B.C.) God is regarded as being in all things. He is the bodiless among bodies. He is the stable among the unstable. He is the constant among the inconstant. He is the inner soul of all beings. There is a great difficulty which confronts the doctrine that God is the inner controller of everything. For in that case how are we to explain the presence of evil in the world? Either we must consider that God is evil or we must say that there are some evil things in the world which are beyond God's control. The author of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* meets this difficulty by suggesting three illustrations. Fire takes the shape of anything it burns, and yet it is different from it. Air keeps its own real nature, though it takes the form of whatever body it enters. His third illustration:

As the Sun, the eye of the whole world,
Is not sullied by the external faults of the eyes,
So the one Inner Soul of all things.

Is not sullied by the evil in the world, being external to it. Thus God, while He dwells in the world, is considered to be free from its imperfections. The *Kaṭha* teaches further the doctrine of grace.

The Soul is not to be obtained by instruction,
Nor by intellect, nor by much learning.
He is to be obtained only by the one whom He chooses;
To such a one that soul reveals his own person.

The *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* (250 to 200 B.C.) contains the fullest expression of the theistic belief to be found in the Upanishads. This Upanishad illustrates in various ways the relation between God and the world. God is concealed in the world as fire is concealed in wood until it is brought forth by the fire-drill. He is in all things as butter is in cream and as water is in river-beds. The relation between God and the world is the same as between a magician and his magic. Again, it is the same as between a spider and the threads which it sends out.

God who covers Himself
Like a spider, with threads
Produced from primary Matter, according to his own
nature.

The worshipper is exhorted to have *bhakti* or love and devotion to God.

In place of the many gods of the Vedic period we have in these two Upanishads religion directed towards the Absolute, who is identified with one of the Vedic gods. Worship becomes more forevent and more devout than the Vedic sacrifice had been. Greater importance is attached to personal experience than to the corporate ceremonies of the earlier period. We have a new emphasis upon the importance and value of the religious teacher.*

With this brief account of earlier theistic development, we may now pass on to the doctrine of God in the *Gītā* (200 B C to 200 A.D.)

According to the *Gītā, Krishna is the Soul of the world.* 'He who knows that I am unborn and without a beginning and also that I am the mighty Lord of the world— he among mortals

* Max Harrison, *Hindu Monism and Pluralism*, pp. 184-201

is undeluded, and is freed from all sins.'[1] *He superintends creation, but is not in any way bound by it.* 'At the end of a cycle all beings pass into Nature which is my own, O Arjuna; and at the beginning of cycle I generate them again. Controlling Nature which is my own, I send forth again and again all this multitude of beings. which are helpless under the sway of Nature. And those works do not bind me, O Arjuna, for I remain unattached in the midst of my works like one unconcerned. Under my guidance Nature gives birth to all things—those that move and those that do not move; and by this means, O Arjuna, the world revolves.'[2] *All men's activities arise from Him.* 'Intelligence, knowledge, sanity, patience, truth, self-control, and calmness; pleasure and pain being and non-being, fear and fearlessness; non-violence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, almsgiving, fame and obloquy—these different attributes of beings arise but from me.'[3] *He orders the birth and rebirth of men according to their various deeds.* 'The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing them to revolve by his mysterious power, as if they were mounted on a machine.'[4] *He has no end to achieve but works for the sake of the world.* 'There is nothing in the three worlds, O Arjuna, for me to achieve, nor is there anything to gain which I have not gained. Yet I continue to work. If I should cease to work, these worlds would perish; and I should cause confusion and destroy these people.'[5] *He becomes incarnate from time to time.* Though I am unborn and my nature is eternal, and though I am the Lord of all creatures, I employ Nature which is my own, and take birth through my divine power. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of the Law I am born from age to age.'[6] *His attitude to the world is controlled and inspired by love.* 'Of

1. BG. x.3. The passages from the *Gītā* in this chapter are taken from the translation by D.S. Sarma (S. Ganesan & Co., Madras).
2. ibid ix. 7–10.
3. ibid. x. 4,5.
4. Ibid. xviii. 61.
5. ibid. iii, 22, 24.
6. ibid. iv. 6, 8.

these the man who knows, who has his devotion centred in One, and who is ever attuned, is the best. For supremely dear am I to the man who knows, and he is dear to me.' 'Listen again to my supreme word, the most secret of all. Thou art well beloved of me, therefore will I tell thee what is good for thee. Fix thy mind on me, be devoted to me, sacrifice to me, prostrate thy-self before me, so shalt thou come to me. I promise thee truly, for thou art dear to me.'[7]

He delivers from sin those who go to Him alone. 'Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the knowing subject—these three form the three-fold incitement to action; and the instrument, the purpose, and the agent—these form the three constituents of action. Surrendering all duties, come to me alone for shelter. Do not grieve, for I will release thee from all sins.'[8] *He is full of grace towards those who seek Him.* 'Though he may be constantly engaged in all kinds of work, yet, having found refuge in me, he reaches by my grace the eternal and indestructible abode. Fixing thy thought on me, thou shalt surmount every difficulty by my grace; but if from self-conceit thou wilt not listen to me, thou shalt utterly perish.'[9]

The idea of God as set forth in the *Gītā* is found in Chapter XI. A vivid and pictorial representation. There God appears in a vision to Arjuna. 'Having spoken thus, O king, Krishna, the great Lord of Yoga, revealed to Arjuna his supreme and divine form: having many faces and eyes, presenting many a wondrous spectacle, decked with many divine ornaments and bearing many a heavenly weapon, wearing celestial garlands and vestments, anointed with divine perfumes, full of many a marvel, resplendent, boundless, universal. If the light of a thousand suns were to burst forth all at once in the sky, it would be like the splendour of that mighty One In the body, O God, I see all the gods and all the varied hosts of beings as well—Brahma the Lord on his lotus throne, all the Rishis and the heavenly Nagas. I behold thee glowing as a mass of light everywhere with thy diadem, mace, and disc, dazzling the sight on

7. ibid. vii. 17; xviii. 64, 65.
8. ibid. xviii. 18, 66.
9. ibid. xviii. 56, 58.

every side, blazing like the burning fire of the sun, and passing all bounds. Thou art the Imperishable, the Supreme to be realized; thou art the Abode of the universe. Thou art the undying Guardian of the eternal law; Thou art the Primal Being, I believe. I behold thee as one with no beginning, middle, nor end; with infinite arms and infinite strength; with the sun and the moon as thine eyes; with my face shining as a flaming fire, and with thy radiance consuming all this universe.'[10]

The importance of this vision cannot be exaggerated. In many ways it is the central passage of the *Gītā*. For in it is gathered up in arresting symbol and vivid image qualities and attributes of God which in other places are all too inadequately described. If it is true that many of the highest intuitions of prophets and seers have come to them in visions, the weight we attach to this vision should be very great indeed. We see here the glory, the power, the beauty, and the all-comprehensiveness of God. Though details of the picture may not appeal to us, we cannot but be impressed with the total effect of awe and splendour which it suggests.

Unfortunately we cannot stop at this point. The doctrine of God which we have set forth is consistent and belongs to the higher types of theism. But we find two other strands of thought in the *Gītā*, which essentially belong to its conception of God.

A. A passage in Chapter IV runs thus: 'Howsoever men approach me, even so do I accept them; for on all sides whatever path they may choose is mine, O Arjuna. Those who desire the fruit of their works worship the gods here; for quickly in this world of men do such works bear fruit.' Again, in Chapter IX., 'Even those who worship the other gods are endowed with faith, worship me alone, O Arjuna, though in a wrong way. For I am the enjoyer and the lord of all sacrifices. But these men do not know my real nature, and hence they fall. Those who worship the gods go to the gods, those who worship the manes go to the manes, those who worship the spirits go

10. ibid. xi. 9, — 12, 15, — 19.

to the spirits, and those who worship me come to me.'[11] This seems to mean that other gods may be worshipped; that rewards are given for such worship, though they are not of the highest kind; and that the Eternal and Supreme One accepts this worship as offered to Himself. This is the first strand I have referred to.

B. There are other passages which seem to indicate a monistic or pantheistic point of view. 'To him the offering is God, the oblation is God; and it is God that offers it in the fire of God. Thus does he realize God in his works, and he teaches him alone.' 'I am the taste in the waters, O Arjuna: I am the light in the sun and the moon. I am the syllable OM in all the Vedas; I am the sound in ether and manliness in men. I am the pure fragrance in the earth and the brightness in the fire. I am the life in all creatures and the austerity in ascetics. Know me to be the seed, O Arjuna, of all things that are. I am the wisdom of the wise, and I am the glory of the glorious. I am the strength of the strong, free from desire and passion. And I am the desire in all creatures, O Arjuna, which is not in conflict with the law.'[12]

As Garbe says, 'At one time Krishna says of himself that he is the one sole supreme God, the creator and ruler of the universe and of all things therein; at another he sets forth the Vedantic doctrine of the *Brahman* and of *Māyā*, the cosmical illusion, and proclaims that the supreme end of man is to transcend this cosmical illusion and become one with Brahman. These two doctrines, the theistic and the pantheistic, are interwoven with one another, sometimes following one another closely and without a break, sometimes more loosely connected.'[13]

The question, therefore, to settle is whether the *Gītā* is in essence theistic or monistic and why these two diverse elements are brought together in it. Several explanations have been offered for the presence of these contradictory views of Reality in the book.

11. ibid. iv. 11, 12; ix. 23-25.
12. ibid. iv. 24; vii. 8-11.
13. Article on *Bhagavad Gita* in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.

1. It has been suggested that the author of the *Gītā* was not a systematic thinker but a poet. Like most poets he was primarily interested in throwing out flashes of insight so expressed as to stir the soul and imagination of the reader. It was not his purpose to view the great problems of life necessarily from a single point of view. But his aim was rather to suggest, according to his different moods, various approaches to the fundamental problems which engage the attention of thoughtful men. When we read a poem we do not look in it for a carefully built-up system of thought. We rather seek to come in contact with a noble spirit who experiences moments of exaltation as he contemplates the universe and who takes his readers to such heights. While it is quite true that the *Gītā* is essentially a poem, we cannot for that reason give up the search for an explanation of these contradictory ideas of Reality found in it. The author of the *Gītā* belongs to that small group of poets who, though they write in verse and are capable of stirring the deepest emotions, are also interested in gathering their thoughts into some kind of a unified scheme. In other words, the author of the *Gītā* is a thinker as well as a poet, and we cannot evade the problem before us by saying that he was really far more of a poet than a thinker.

2. Another explanation which has been offered is that the author of the *Gītā* is a theist; the *Gītā* as it came from his pen was completely theistic in its outlook, but a later editor has introduced into it passages which are monistic in their trend. The philosophy of Monism was becoming popular, and an editor who wanted to make use of an ancient document to support Monism has interpolated into it monistic ideas. This explanation is offered by Garbe. But, like all other theories of interpolation, it is impossible to prove it conclusively. It is always easy to get rid of difficult passages from our texts by supposing that they are due to a different hand. But how can we effectively and convincingly show that they are indeed so?

3. Another explanation which has been given is that the author of the *Gītā* is above all interested in a synthetic view of life. He comes across different ideas, each with a measure of truth in it, and he sets them all forth without troubling to make

up his own mind as to which is essentially correct. He knows, for instance, that there are three paths leading to God: *Karma Mārga* or the path of action, *Jñāna Mārga* or the path of knowledge, and the *Bhakti Mārga* or the path of love. Instead of saying clearly and definitely that only one of these paths leads to God he describes all these paths, explains their difficulties and values and leaves us uncertain as to whether all these paths are of equal importance or whether one of them is of greater importance than the others. In the same way he is attracted by the theistic and the monistic approaches to God. He knows there is a measure of truth in both of them. He knows that God is a tremendous Reality and that sometimes He must be described in personal terms and sometimes in impersonal terms. He does not eliminate one of these, but allows both to stand together. This explanation does not do justice to the profound thought lying behind the *Gītā*. It seems impossible after a careful study of the *Gītā* to rest in the conviction that the author simply brought together two opposite points of view, realizing the value in each, but without making any serious attempt to resolve them into a complete harmony.

4. Yet another explanation of this apparent inconsistency is found in Rudolf Otto's book, *Mysticism; East and West.* Professor Otto discusses Śaṅkara's doctrine with regard to the *Saguṇa Brahman* (personal conception of God) and the *Nirguṇa Brahman* (impersonal conception of God). It will be remembered that Śaṅkara uses the *Gītā* to support his doctrine of *Advaita* or monism. Professor Otto says: 'The case is very similar with Śaṅkara. When this relationship is understood one is no longer perplexed by his apparent 'confusion.' The method which he uses is really that of *Samuccaya* (summing up) with regard to the *Saguṇa* and the *Nirguṇa* Brahman. Only thus is he comprehensible, and from this point the confusion in his writings is solved. Śaṅkara can employ this method quite consistently, for the term 'Nothing' which the mystic uses of God is the superlative exaltation of the divine above all 'something.' In like manner Śaṅkara's *Nirguṇatvam* is the superlative of *Saguṇatvam*. The former does not deny the latter, but the latter is taken up into the former. Therefore Śaṅkara can justifiably pass from the standpoint of the *parā vidyā* to that of the *aparā vidyā* and

vice versa a hundred times until the distinctions between them are completely obliterated (Eckhart does exactly the same). The significance of this process of *Samuccaya* is obviously to assure to the highest Brahman all the conceivable divine values of theism and include them in the conception of the Brahman.'[14]

5. The explanation which I myself should like to put forth is this. With Rāmānuja, the greatest theistic commentator on the *Bhagavad Gītā*, I should like to understand all the seemingly monistic passages as really the expression of a belief in an immanent God. Take, for instance, the passage, 'To him the offering is God, the oblation is God, and it is God that offers it in the fire of God.'[15] It will be seen here that the apparatus of offering, the object offered, the devotee who offers it, and the fire in which it is offered are all equated with God. Here, surely, is Pantheism. Rāmānuja in his famous commentary on the *Gītā* explains the passage as meaning that the devotee contemplates Brahman as abiding in all acts. In other words, God is not the apparatus of offering; He is immanent in it. He is not the oblation; He is immanent in the oblation. He is not the devotee who offers; He is immanent in the devotee. He is not the fire in which the offering is made; He is immanent in the fire. In this way Rāmānuja consistently explains all seemingly pantheistic passages in the *Gītā*. Perhaps Rāmānuja is right. The line between Theism and Pantheism is always so thin. The man who is full of God often finds God everywhere. He does not trouble to think out the logical implications. By maintaining that the passages in the *Gītā* which seem to indicate Monism are really meant to teach Immanence we get a consistent point of view.

There is another question of even greater practical importance. If it is true that the *Gītā* is consistently theistic and if it is also true that through the ages it has had unrivalled hold upon the thought and devotion of the people, how does it happen that Theism has never become the dominating religious philosophy of India? Today we find the *Gītā* widely read. In previous ages it was probably not so widely read because education

14. *Mysticism: East and West*, p. 110.

15. *Gītā*, iv. 24.

was confined to a few and religious instruction was not given to everyone. But we have reason to suppose that the thinkers and scholars of India have all along been influenced by this book. How, then, does it happen that through them it has not become the compelling philosophy of India ? To this important question I should like to offer a solution.

The *Gītā* has failed to present a convincing case for Theism by accepting and allowing the worship of other gods. It is perfectly true that the *Gītā* assigns a secondary place to these other gods. It is also true that the *Gītā* points out that the reward which is attached to the worship of these gods is temporary and not the best. The highest type of reward is given only to the man who worships the Eternal and Supreme One. But even so, the very fact that these lesser gods are recognized has spoilt the completeness and the adequacy of the theistic position of the *Gītā*. No faith spreads which thus compromises with lesser beings. It is only when faith is devoted to a supreme Being and its importance is emphasized without a shadow of doubt or hesitation that it wins a large following. That is how the Hebrew prophets left their impress on religion. They stood unflinchingly for their belief in one God. They did not allow any sort of room for other gods. They vigorously and emphatically called the attention of men to the Holy One of Israel. Their gaze was fixed on Him. Not for a moment did they allow themselves or their hearers and readers to divert their look to other beings.

SYED MOHIDEEN SHAH

THE GĪTĀ AND THE QURAN

'Of some apostless we have already told the story; of others we have not'. IV: 163 (*Quran*)

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, one of the greatest living Indians interested in the welfare of mankind in general and of the Indians in particular, is leading a life of austerity devoted to service. In his foreword to *The Essence of Quran* he has written as follows :-

'Science has made the world smaller. It seeks to bring human beings closer to one another. Will it be proper then for the human society to be divided into sects and for each sect to consider itself superior to others and look down upon them? We shall have to understand each other properly and imbibe in ourselves the virtues of one another.' With this object in view he has placed his views on the *Gītā* through the *Gītā-pravachan* and as a result of his study of the *Quran* for the last twentyfive years *The Essence of Quran* took final shape and form. It is on the lines laid down by the great Acharya that I propose to deal with the subject *'The Gītā and Quran'* for the purpose of discussion on this occasion.

The *Gītā* and the *Quran* are the sacred books the of Hindus and Muslims respectively. They deal with the problem of life and claim to guide man on right lines. In the words of Iqbal 'There are certain common problems to religion, philosophy and higher poetry. The character and general structure of the universe in which we live, the permanent element in the constitution of this universe, our relation to it, the place we occuppy in it and the kind of conduct that befits the place we occupy are important. Poetic inspiration is essentially individual in its character; it is figurative, vague and indefinite. Religion in its more advanced forms rises higher than poetry. It moves from individual to society. In its attitude towards

the ultimate Reality it is opposed to the limitations of man; it enlarges his claims and holds out the prospect of nothing less than a direct vision of Reality.' This will be evident from a careful study of the *Gītā* and the *Quran.*

Modern man is greatly in need of the light of religion even though he may not like to be told so. This fact is there. It looks as if mankind has lost its moorings and is in search of something which will satisfy it.

In these days when the godless West is groping in the dark in search of a purpose in life and quest for peace of mind and the source which will furnish them with the means to attain what they want, the East which has glorious spiritual past is being drawn to the way of the West by the dazzling brilliance of the superficial aspect of Western civilisation and culture. It is perhaps akin to the gad-fly being drawn to flame by its brightness leading to its own destruction. The people of the East with their rich spiritual heritage are those who will be able to guide mankind and show the people of the world the right path to good life and peaceful existence. The sacred books of the East contain gems of wisdom. If people would try to understand the sacred teachings of the books and act on the sound principles contained therein, they are sure not only to live peacefully but also help mankind to prosper in life and fulfil the purpose for which man has come into existence.

Of the large number of scriptures that are extant, I am now concerned only with the *Gītā* and the *Quran.* The *Gītā* is an ancient and sacred book of guidance to the erring mankind and it tries to solve the problem of life and existence. The fundamental questions that agitate the minds of all thinking people who want to act righteously are dealt with in the form of doubts raised by a disciple and answered by the preceptor. The problem of life is considered in all its aspects and one is taken to the depths of consciousness—the spring of all actions. So profound are the teachings contained in the *Gītā* that the book has been rightly named 'The Song Celestial'. The *Quran* is the scripture of Islam, a book of guidance and in its own words 'This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt,

reason and correct principles. Religion affects the whole life and outlook of man. To reconcile religious teachings with the life process is the responsibility of the theologians. Unless they are able to successfully achieve this, the attitude of the present generation towards religion is not likely to change. For this purpose the scriptures have to be critically studied in the light of the present day advancement of knowledge and progress of science.

Religion is based on faith and action. The fundamental belief is in the existence of God. Both the *Gītā* and the *Quran* speak of the ultimate Reality. The verses from the *Quran* and the *Gītā* referring to God are quoted below: 'Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of his light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The Lamp is in a Glass. The Glass is as it were a shinging star (This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree, an Olive, neither of the East nor of the West. Whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light. Allah guideth unto His light whom He will. And Allah speaketh to mankind in allegories, for Allah is Knower of all things' XXIV. 35 (*Quran*)

'Allah : There is no God save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him. Unto Him belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that intercedeth with Him, save by His leave? He knoweth that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will. His throne includeth the heavens and the earth and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous.' II : 255. (*Quran*)

'If the splendour of a thousand suns were ever to present itself at once in the sky, that would be the splendour of that Mighty Being'. XI.12. (*Gītā*)

'Thou art the Imperishable, the supreme Being worthy to be known. Thou art the great Abode of this universe. Thou art the undying guardian of the eternal *dharma*. Thou art the ancient *Puruṣa*, I deem.' XI.18. (*Gītā*)

'This space between heaven and earth and all the quarters are filled by thee alone. Having seen this, thy marvellous and awful form, the three worlds are trembling. O, High-Souled-Being.' (*Gītā*) XI.19.

Many passages in the *Quran* and *Gītā* referring to God are similar. The nearest approach to God in the physical world is light. Says Iqbal 'Thus, in the world of change, light is the nearest approach to the Absolute'. (*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 64) Again Iqbal says, 'The history of religious thoughts discloses various ways of escape from an individualist conception of the ultimate Reality which is conceived as some vague, vast and pervasive cosmic element, such as light'. He again says, 'The history of religion reveals modes of thought that tend towards pantheism. *Quran* speaks of God as the ultimate Ego'. Explaining this Iqbal says :

'The ultimate Reality is rationally directed creative life. Religion seeks a clear contact with Reality'.

Based on the *Quran*, explaining the relation of God and man, Iqbal has remarked 'I have conceived the ultimate Reality as an Ego; and I must add now that from the ultimate Ego only egos proceed. The creative energy of the ultimate Ego, in whom deed and thought are identical, functions as ego-unities... But there are degrees in the expression of egohood. Throughout the entire gamut of being runs the gradually rising note of egohood until it reaches its perfection in man. That is why the *Quran* declares the ultimate Ego to be nearer to man than his own neck-vein. Like pearls do we live and move and have our being in the perpectual flow of divine life'.

'Man is the vice-regent of God', so says the *Quran*. 'Of all the creation of God he alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker. Endowed with the power to imagine a better world, and to mould what is, unto what ought to be, the ego in him aspires, in the interests of an increasingly unique and comprehensive individuality to exploit all the various environments on which he may be called upon to operate during the course of an endless career'. Guidance is available in the sacred books. Man is asked to think and act.

Regarding the relation of man with Nature the following explanation by Iqbal in the light of the teaching of the *Quran* is worth consideration: 'Only that truly exists which can say 'I am' it is the degree of the intuition of 'I-amness' that determines the place of a thing in the scale of being. We too say 'I am'. But our 'I-amness' is dependent and arises out of distinction between the self and the not-self. The ultimate self, in the words of the *Quran*, can afford to dispense with all the worlds. To him the not-self does not present itself as a confronting 'other'. r else it would have to be, like our finite self, in spatial relation with the confronting other. What we call nature or the not-self is only a fleeting moment in the life of God. His, 'I-amness' is independent, elemental, absolute'. Of such a self it is impossible for us to form an adequate conception. As the *Quran* says, 'Naught is like Him; yet He hears and sees. Now a self is unthinkable without a character, i.e., a uniform mode of behaviour. Nature is not a mass of pure materiality occupying a void. It is structure of events, a systematic mode of behaviour, and as such organic to the ultimate self. Nature is to the Divine self as character is to the human self. In the picturesque phrase of the *Quran* it is the habit of Allah... The Knowledge of Nature is the knowledge of God's behaviour. In our observation of Nature we are virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with the Absolute Ego; and this is only another form of worship.

The *Quran* speaks of God as one and man as the creation of God. Man is the vice-regent of God on earth. He does not cease to exist even after death. There is no rebirth in Islam but man continues to live. Every individual is born free and innocent. The freedom of the individual and the problem of fate or destiny is a moot point. The theologians of Islam have tried to explain this as many others have also attempted. Destiny is time regarded as prior to the disclosures of its possibilities. Fatalism is foreign to the spirit of Islam and the teachings of the *Quran*. Man is asked to work out his own destiny, and is answerable for his action. The law of compensation works throughout. Reward for good deeds and punishment for the wrongs is sure to follow. The *Quran* is clear on this point. Says the *Quran*: 'And every man's fate have we fastened about his neck and on the Day of Resurrection will we bring forthwith

to him a book which shall be proferred to him wide open: 'Read thy book: there needeth none but thyself to make out an account against thee this day' 17.14. (*Quran*). The human ego has a beginning in time, there is no possibility for him to return to this earth and the finite ego will approach the infinite Ego to see for himself the consequences of his past action and to judge the possibilities of his future.

According to Islam. Heaven and Hell are states, not localities. The descriptions in the *Quran* are visual representations of an inner fact, i.e., character. Hell, in the words of the *Quran*, is 'God's kindled fire which mounts above the hearts' — the painful realization of one's failure as a man. Heaven is the joy of triumph over the forces of disintegration. There is no such thing as eternal damnation in Islam. The word 'eternity' used in certain verses relating to Hell. is explained by the *Quran* itself to mean only a period of time. Hell, as conceived by the *Quran*, is not a pit of everlasting torture inflected by a revengeful God; it is corrective experience which may make a hardened ego once more sensitive to the living breeze of Divine Grace. Nor is Heaven a holiday. Life is one and continuous. Man marches always onward to receive ever fresh illuminations from an Infinite Reality which 'every moment appears in a new glory'. And the recipient of divine illumination is not merely a passive recipient. Every act of a free ego creates a new situation, and thus offers opportunities of creative unfolding.

The *Gītā* is one of the great religious classics of the world. As already stated it is in the form of a dialogue between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna is tempted to desert his post of duty. He proposed to retire. Kṛṣṇa reprimands him and points out to him the higher way of dispassionately discharging his duty with faith in God. The 700 verses of the *Gītā* are divided into 18 chapters.

Gītā goes beyond the ethical question. There are two broad streams of thought (1) philosophical stream describing what God is and (2) a religious stream suggesting what man should do to reach Him. The greatness of the scripture lies

in the fact that in its description of both the end and the means it gives a synopsis of the religious thought and experience of India through the ages. Being a predominantly theistic work it often describes the ultimate reality as a personal God, identified with the *avatār* Kṛṣṇa. The supreme is referred to as immanent spirit, as the transcendent absolute and finally as the state of one's own, awakened soul. It speaks of the threefold path of traditional Hindu religion, 1. Way of work (*karma-yoga*) 2. Way of love (*bhakti-yoga*) and 3. Way of knowledge (*jñāna-yoga*) leading to the mystic union with God. Numberless commentaries, glossaries and expositions are there, ancient and modern.

The *Gītā* speaks of the four *varṇas*, i.e., orders due to birth. Rebirth (*saṃsāra*) due to *karma* of previous *janma* is referred to. *Pāpa* (sin), *puṇya* (merit), *mokṣa* (salvation), *dharma* (morality) are also spoken of. Birth in a particular caste becomes an index of soul's progress towards God. It speaks of *dharma* the total body of moral and religious rules. The *Quran*, the word of God, is the most important religious book of the Muslims. It speaks of belief in (1) God, (2) Angels, (3) inspired books (4) prophets (5) the day of Judgement and (6) God's predestination of good and evil. Unity of God is emphasised. There is no idolatry in Islam. Of the religious practices, (1) recital of the creed. (2) performance of divine-worship daily: (3) fasting in Ramzan. (4) payment of legal alms and (5) pilgrimage of Mecca are important.

The contents of the *Quran* are extremely varied. The theological passages emphasise the Oneness, the Almightiness and the Righteousness of God. Idolatry and the deification of created beings are condemned. The joys of the heaven and the pains of the hell are depicted in vivid sensuous imagery, and warnings are given of the approaching advent of the last day and the judgement of the works. Believers are given general moral instruction as well as directions for special occasions. Many passages deal with the ordinances of religion, such as prayer, fasting, alms giving and pilgrimage. Many are in the nature of civil or criminal laws, concerning marriage and inheritance, the punishment for adultery, theft, etc. Apart from theological matters,

its passages refer to the past history of mankind, the working of nature, the preaching of the prophets of old, etc.

It has been rightfully said that the world's great religious founders left a spiritual heritage, a system, doctrine or code of living, by which man could commune with God. They left a beacon of divine light in a dark and saddened world of humanity. Their lives were shining examples of the truths they expounded. But the present day exponents of the great religious movements occasionally give rise to bitterness. If only they would take care to serve mankind and help man to reach a closer understanding of his God they will be able to construct broad roads which may lead to the happiness and welfare of man.

The conflict between religion and science so acutely felt in the West is also making headway in the East. The future is difficult to predict. Many and conflicting forces are now at work. The planned economic development of the country with emphasis on secularism and the desire to bring about a socialistic pattern of society might well affect religion adversely. It is the duty of all those who believe in God and want to serve the higher interests of mankind to see that the finer sentiments in man are awakened and fuller life made possible by the development of physical, mental, moral and spiritual qualities latent in man. Let service to humanity be the motto.

K.C. VARADACHARI

AUROBINDO ON THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ

Śrī Aurobindo considered that the *Bhagavadgītā* had a much larger application than usually presumed by both the ancient commentators and *Ācāryās* and the modern politico-social reformers. Writing in the very first issue of his philosophical review *The Arya* he observed taking Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak's view that he always held the book to be a work expounding the principles of human conduct from a Vedantic ethical point of view, that is reconciling the philosophy of active life with the philosophy of knowledge and the philosophy of devotion to God. Tilak held that the natural sense of the *Gītā* before the great commentators wrote their commentaries. After their works were written an artificial scholastic tone prevailed.

Aurobindo writes : 'Those who have studied the *Gītā* with a free mind, still more those who have tried to live it, cannot doubt for a moment, the justice of Mr Tilak's point of view. But is not the tendency of the *Gītā* towards a superethical rather than an ethical activity ? Ethics is usually the standardising of the highest current social ideals of conduct: the Song Celestial while recognizing their importance, seeks to fix the principle of action deeper in the centre of a man's soul and points ultimately to the government of our outward life by the divine will within.' (*The Arya* Vol, I pp. 60, 61)

It is to show that the *Gītā* teaches a supra-ethical *karma-yoga*, and an integral *yoga* that does justice to the *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* from a supra - ethical point of view Aurobindo wrote his brilliant *Essays on the Gītā*.

The *Essays on the Gita* comprises two volumes or books. The first book consists of 24 chapters and the second book also consists of 24 chapters.

Aurobindo holds it to be of small importance to extract from the *Gītā* the exact metaphysical connotation as it was

understood by the men of the time. In the *Gītā* there is very little that is purely local or temporal and its spirit is large, profound and universal.

'The thought of the Gita is not pure monism, although it sees in one unchanging pure eternal self the foundation of all cosmic existenc: nor Mayavada although it speaks of Maya of the three modes of Prakriti omnipresent in the created world, nor is it qualified Monism although it places in the One his eternal supreme Prakriti manifested in the form of the jiva and lays most stress on dwelling in God rather than dissolution as the supreme state of spiritual consciousness, nor is it Samkhya although it explains the created world by the double principle of Purusha and Prakriti, nor is it Vaishnava Theism although it presents to us Krishna who is the Avatar of Vishnu according to the Puranas as the supreme Deity and allows no essential difference, nor any actual superiority of the status of the indefinable relationless Brahman over that of the Lord of beings who is the master of the universe and the Friend of all creatures.' (p.8. *Essays on the Gita*: Am.ed.)

'Assuredly the Gita is not a weapon for dialectical Warfare. It is a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth and experience and the view it gives us embraces all the province of that supreme region.' (ibid.)

Aurobindo had long before he wrote the *Gītā* attained the companionship and discipleship of the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as he declared in his *Uttarapara* Speech. He has himself recorded in one of his replies to a letter from a leading educationist that he had actually been given the experience of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that he had been bestowed with the mind of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*Letters of Sri Aurobindo* Vol. I) even like the divine sight granted to Arjuna. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is capable of being seen even now for He is the *avatār* of this Age.

It is verily through His grace that one gets this blessing; and Aurobindo had expounded the importance of integral surrender, *śaraṇāgati*. It is undoubtedly through the grace of the Divine that one is capable of that divine devotion through

Buddhi-yoga which makes for the attainment of God-mind or God-thought without which a proper understanding of the teaching of the *Gītā* is well-nigh impossible. It is true that devotion to God as Śrī Kṛṣṇa brought to Aurobindo the opening of the eyes of knowledge and activity both of which are divine or supramental. Devotion leads to the renunciation of the limited and human way of works and knowledge and entering into the divine way of knowledge and works. It is only by complete dedication of all to Him one is capable of crossing over all barriers (*Gītā*- XVIII. 57-66). This is the supreme secret of *yoga* or divine living. One thus passes out of the human egoistic way of living and enters the divine way of living in God for God and by God. A human intellectual way will not deliver the truth of one's action or knowledge or even devotion. Helplesness rose out of them, and the conflicts arose out of them. One has to transcend the human way of approaches to duty and knowledge and no reconciliation is possible or stabte between them. Indeed each one of them rules out the others.

But an integral surrender is an upward surrender, a perfect self-giving of one's whole being to the transcendent and universal divinity from whom he comes and to whom he returns and in whom he lives. This is the condition for the descent of the divine mind or Kṛṣṇa Caitanya into one's being for its upliftment and integral transformation into a divine instrument-*nimitta-mātram* for the divine works, endowed with divine knowledge, gnosis and divine devotion. This attainment of *maccitta*, is not to be had by either constant remembrance or constant recitation or singing and other methods of *pūjā* though Aurobindo does not dismiss them as wholly irrelevant or obstructive of true integral surrender. His is an all-inclusive rather than all-but-one exclusive method of approach for obtaining the divine descent (*āveśa* or *āvirbhāva* or *aham-grahopāsana*).

Aurobindo's philosophical doctrine of eternal oneness in eternal multiplicity suggested by the indwelling of the *Īśvara* in every soul as the soul itself (*jīvabhūta*) along with the supra-ethical descent of the divine into oneself as the inmost power in the world of souls (*jīvaloke*) working out the manifold functions of the six-fold *prakṛti* gives the cue to the conception of the descent

of the divine mind in oneself as the most dynamic factor in the divine evolution - *janma karma ca me divyam*-spoken of under the *avatāra*-concept earlier in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

It is this that forms the inner spirit and genius of the life divine - the metaphysical treatise on the spiritual bases of man. Every descent of the divine with some supreme power of His being leads to an evolutionary upsurge in creation – a point that I had expounded in my contribution to the First Annual of the Aurobindo Pathamandir in 1942, (*Divine Evolutionism.*)

It is therefore imperative to get this descent into oneself first, whatever be the nature of man, whether karmically disposed to action, or intellectually disposed to knowledge or intellect or inclined to devotional love of the Supreme Godhead alone with one-pointedness (*ekānta-bhakti*); to be able to get this is possible only through integral surrender (*śaraṇāgati*, and *ātmasamarpaṇa*). One rises above the complex psychological obstructions such as sin-complex and fear-complex and in full reliance on God bestowed with the divine mind proceeds to be just an instrument of God's divine work.

It is the belief and faith of Aurobindo that this condition is not possible except for the *yogins* of the integral path of surrender and self-offering and absolute devotion that makes for the descent of the divine mind into oneself. It is here that he leans on the concept of the *Pāñcarātra-āgama* of the *hārda*, the descent of the Lord into the heart of the devotee, who looks after the *yogakṣema* of the devotee. Aurobindo in his special theory emphasizes this through his discovery of the supermind as fulfilling this function most adequately for world purposes (*loka-saṅgraha*) whereas possibly the divine himself descending might involve the realisation of absolute god-condition beyond the *prakṛti*. The soul itself is a *parā-prakṛti* (*parā-prakṛtir jīva-bhūtā*) and its entry into the world of the *prakṛti* has a secret mystery that is now hidden under the interpretations of illusion. Once the divine mind itself enters into the soul or the soul realises its oneness with the Divine then it is possible for the soul to realise the life of infinity here on this prakrtiic world. This is a possibility to the *yogin* and not to those who are seized

with crass dullness. *Vimūḍhāḥ nānu paśyanti paśyanti jñānacakṣuṣaḥ,* (XV. 10.) and

> *Yatanto yoginaścainam paśyanty ātmany avasthitam*
> *Yatanto' py akṛtātmāno nainam paśyantyacetasaḥ.* (XV. 11.)

The *Gītā* is a teaching for all seekers after the Infinite and transcendent life that promises the aspirations of freedom from rebirth and freedom from fear of *pāpa* and *puṇya,* and even assures us the supreme state beyond all misery – the supreme abode of the transcendent Godhead Himself – where the sun does not shine, nor the moon nor even the fire. The supreme secret of being lies in its getting all substenance from that which is beyond the infinite and the transcendent is the meaning of the manifold multiplicity. He verily is that Being spoken of by all the Vedas – life of all life, mind of all minds, the vision of all eyes and so on. He is the One in all living and moving and the unmoving the *kṣara* and the *akṣara.* Once this truth is grasped then a new life in infinity opens up.

Aurobindo avers that the entire interpretation of the *Gītā* not to speak of the Veda proceeded by the instruments and logic of the finite mind, and is therefore riddled with intellectual dialectics and devices. Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika logic is suited to *dvaita* finite thinking. The *advaita* logistic is assuredly trying to wield this weapon to demolish the Nyāya-metaphysics and Vaiśeṣika atomistics. But it is unable to arrive at the truth of the Infinite except in negations. Nor is the Viśiṣṭādvaita is in a better place for it has, instead of leaning on the logic of the infinity and interior experiences of the mystics and *śarīra-śarīri-bhāva,* slided into the Vaiśeṣika and to some extent to the Sṃākhya psychological and inductive logic yet of the finite mind. It is found that Caitanya had experienced this inflow of the divine presence even as the Āḷvārs like Nammāḷvār and Viṣṇu Citta had done; seizing upon this he overcame his original dualistic Nyāya-logic of difference and dependence true of a pluralistic society with monotheism or monarchy, and suggested the logic of *acintyabhedābheda.*

Aurobindo sees that it is necessary to go still farther than Caitanya to explain the spiritual logic of the Infinite which

is noumenal and not merely phenomenal, delusory or real. It is this logic of the Infinite that he expounds in his *Life Divine*. But it is from his inner spiritual or mystical understanding of the *Bhagavadgītā* that he was emboldened to undertake a clear and deep understanding of the supra-ethical structure of the life of the Infinite.

It is because this great spiritual mystical logic–and-metaphysics of the Infinite is a desideratum in the modern world, Aurobindo had emphasized it as against the expositions of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, magnificent though it was and scholarly, and also against the still later expositions of Mahatma Gandhi who though eminently a *bhakta* practised *karma* with *anāsakti*, and others who were more devoted. to the past rather than to the eternal challenge of the changing world. Terrifying and even moving to disintegration of all spiritual values though the world is, yet it is only by means of the divine descent – either by the way of supreme Godhead in historical personality or as the inward aspiration of Aurobindo–into multiplicity of souls that had reached this level of spiritual elevation, that mankind is yearning for divine participation.

Srī Kṛṣṇa's call to Arjuna is great enough but His solution of conflicts has eternal meaning for the seekers of the Infinite, seekers after freedom from all limitations arising from finitude and of earthly allurements. Surely *Bhagavadgītā* is a *mokṣa-śāstra* though it teaches something more than a *yoga* of works or *yoga* of *jñāna* or *yoga* of mere *bhakti*, each of which might grant a *mokṣa*. *Paripūrṇānubhava* is however for those who dedicate themselves for the life in God's infinite world or Being and not for those who just seek to go beyond the finite world.

Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gītā* gives the development of a mystic transcendent theology that is profoundly an expression of the Life of infinity. Ordinary dualistic interpretation is a kind of naturalistic theology, whereas psychological theology of the Yoga schools and Sāṃkhya does not yet do justice to the logic of the infinite, though pointing to something far beyond which Vedānta supplies. The transcendent divine theology does not go far beyond the finite for it suffers from the illusion

of the world and the phenomenal whose renunciation is the one condition of liberation. The infinite logic and being come to their own only in the light of the transcendent Infinite constantly and severally descending into the multiplicity for the purpose of elevating the maltiplicity both collectively and severally. The *Gītā* reveals the supreme mystery of how the Divine is intimately linked with His finite world which he renovates and enlivens with his infinite Oneness.

In a sense Aurobindo completely transforms all the previous interpretations of the *Gītā* and yet provides his own superb solution of the problem of human eonduct in a divine world.

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

THE GĪTĀ AS INTERPRETED BY MAHATMA GANDHI

The obliteration of any dichotomy between profession and practice was a cardinal principle of life with Mahatma Gandhi. From his youth there was a regular preparation in him to act up to his own convictions. If the tragic story of Hariścandra when enacted on the stage deeply stirred him as a child of nine to put the query to himself 'Why should not all be truthful like Hariścandra', it presaged the growth in him of serious introspection of inherent capacities for striving after high ideals. It was therefore a rich find for him to be introduced to BG by some friends in England. Unfortunately his lack of adequate knowledge of the original text gave him only in translation the earliest idea of a book which contained such verses as could capture his heart at once. They were the following *ślokas :*

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात् संजायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायथे ॥
क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशः बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥

(BG., II 62, 63.)

If one
Ponders on objects of the senses, there springs
Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds
Recklessness; then the memory - all betrayed -
Lets noble prupose go, and saps the mind,
Till purpose, mind and man are all undone.

(*The Song celestial* by Edwin Arnold)

Even a few first readings of the book made him regard it as of priceless worth. For knowledge of truth he could not think of another surer source than the *Gītā*.

But Gandhiji gradually developed a mind to approach the *Gītā* not as a scholar or a systematic philosopher. To him it proved a dictionary for constant reference in order to teach him the correct significance of human actions, their derivation from tradition and usage and their different connotations in the actual conflicts of life and in the context of the various stages of an advancing modern civilization. Indeed, nothing more of practical guidance he could seek in his dedicated life of service to humanity. He often was heard to say: 'When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagavad Gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of ovewhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and, if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita.'[1]

But for this conscious self-integration and earnestness to seek the light, the *Gītā* would have remained, as it is with many a savant and thinker, only a playground for intellectual exercise and polemical pyrotechnics. He had himself confessed to his utter lack of scholarship while trying to read meanings into a work which has had a galaxy of brilliant commentators and interpreters, both ancient and modern. At the same time his experiences of an active life and his own experiments with truth made him more than once declare that it was the *Gītā* that like a mother, had never failed him whenever he found himself in difficulty or distress.

Attempts are generally made to debate the point whether mainly the Mahatma was an Advaitin believing only in the one and only formless, undefinable Ātman or Brahman or whether he was a Viśiṣṭādvaitin acknowledging the existence of a Paramātman or ultimate reality to whom one and all will have to yield their all in complete surrender. However much the student of philosophy backed by erudition might try to make out from his many statements and writings that on final analysis he must be belonging to one school of philosophy or other, there seems

1. *Young India* (6-8-1925)

to be absolutely no reason to label him with any particular school or bring him under any known category. For our purpose to ascertain how his interpretations of the *Gītā* would mark him out as singularly intuitive among the constructive explorers of our spiritual heritage, it would perhaps suffice to consider him as somewhat of a free thinker without at the same time being understood in any sense of his having violated any of the well established schools of thought or traditional beliefs in Hinduism. Rather, he never even anywhere discussed with complete arguments either for or against any of the philosophical persuasions prevalent amidst us. Nor at any time was he inclined to the founding of any world-religion which would satisfy the needs or demands of the many votaries of distinct religions of the world. He was out and out a Hindu believing at the same time that every other religion required of him equally deep respect for its tenets and doctrines. Nevertheless he was fond of saying that the *Gītā* became to him 'the Key to the scriptures of the world.'

It unravelled for him the deepest mysteries to be found in other religions.[2] He was never prone to misjudge their values in a comparative study of some of them. For he was heard to opine that when he heard the Sermon of the Mount, he read nothing new in it but found it vividly told what he had learnt in childhood.[3] Only he added that 'What the Sermon describes in a graphic manner, the Bhagavad Gita reduces to a scientific formula' [4] still, with all that, the *Gītā* alone satisfied him when actually doubts arose in his mind and made him seek solution for them.

The one hitherto undeclared message of the *Gītā* which he discovered as running throughout from the second to the 18th chapter is the doctrine of ***ahiṃsā***. He was very insistent through his writings on the *Gītā* that if any two teachings could be held as central in the entire *Gītā* they were ***ahiṃsā*** and Truth. He was certain that although the *Gītā* had not in so many words

2. *Harijan* (18-4-1936).
3. *Young India* (22-12-1927).
4. Ibid.

pointed out *ahiṃsā* as a main theme of discourse or even alluded to it in the sense he was giving prominence to it, there could be no successful argument levelled against its definite implication after what the Lord had expatiated on the condition of the poised mind in so many verses found in Chapters II.56 to 71 and Chapter XII.13 to 19 :

दु:खेष्वनुद्विग्नमना: सुखेषु विगतस्पृह: ।
वीतरगभयक्रोध: स्थितर्धार्मुनिरुच्यते ॥
विहाय कामान् यस्सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निस्पृह: ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कार: स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ (II. 56, 71.)

He who is not perturbed in mind by adversity and who has no eagerness amidst prosperity, he from whom desire, fear and anger have fallen away – he is called a sage of firm understanding.

The man who gives up all desires and goes about free from any longing, and bereft of the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' – he attains peace.

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्र: करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कार: समदु: खसुख: क्षमी ॥
तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेत: स्थिरमति: भक्तिमान् मे प्रियो नर: ॥ (XII. 13, 19.)

He who never hates any being and is kindly and compassionate, who is free from the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' and who looks upon pleasure and pain alike and has forbearance.

He who is alike in praise and dispraise, who is silent and satisfied with whatever he has, who has no home, and is firm of mind – dear to me is the man thus devoted.

Gandhiji's main point was that if Ātman or Self can remain untouched or unaffected by any of these pairs of opposites mentioned above, the mind inevitably becomes wedded to *ahiṃsā*. Certainly it stands to reason, if only we recollect how the Lord even at the opening verses of the second chapter tried to show the difference between ātman and anātman, the soul and the body.

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ (II. 19.)

He who thinks it slays and he who thinks it is slain – neither of them knows it well. It neither slays nor is slain.

Once it is clear the ātman is found pure, unaffected and beyond any external agency's power or influence, there can be hardly an occasion for the rise of hatred or violence. Therefore, according to Gandhiji, despite the absence of any specific reference to the doctrine of *ahiṃsā*, it can be easily read into a number of verses of the *Gītā*.

Another point of emphasis for Gandhiji is the *anāsakti-yoga* as the only path leading to freedom for the hungering soul. Desirelessness or the detachment born of no desire for fruit leads the way to Truth and *ahiṃsā*. It is evident that behind untruth and violence there will be lurking always a desire to attain a coveted object. Gandhiji conceded, however, that the *Gītā* was not born to establish *ahiṃsā*. It only breathed the balm of *anāsakti-yoga* to the bruised soul which endeavoured to gain freedom for shaping its own destiny.

To critics who contended that when the author of the *Gītā* had not included *ahiṃsā* in desirelessness, how could he be so very sure of its implication in the text, he answered by giving a naive reply that when a poet put a particular truth before the world, it need not necessarily follow that he should have preconceived all its meanings. For in a poet's word many meanings can be discovered. The poet himself cannot deny

other distinct suggestions in his words once the poem has left his hands. Let us listen to Gandhiji himself on this: 'A poet's meaning is limitless. Like man, the meaning of great writings suffer evolution. On examining the history of languages, we notice that the meaning of important words has changed or expanded.'[5] In illustration of his standpoint he showed how in the very *Gītā* certain words have been allowing of different connotations according to the context. For instance यज्ञ (sacrifice) and संन्यास (renunciation) bear different shades of significance in different contexts. Gandhiji concluded his interpretation of *Gītā's* contribution to the doctrine of *ahiṃsā* thus: 'Perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observance of *ahiṃsā* in every shape and form'. स्वानुभव or experience of his own gave Gandhiji the clue to find out *ahiṃsā* in the verses of the *Gītā*. He said 'It is perhaps clear from the foregoing that without *ahiṃsā* it is not possible to seek and find Truth. *Ahiṃsā* and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse and which is the reverse. Nevertheless *ahiṃsā* is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so *ahiṃsā* is our supreme duty.'[6] The explanation does not look laboured or strained.

While on *ahiṃsā*, Gandhiji did not forget to make out that it is the cream obtained from the churning of desirableness in action. Renunciation of fruits of action can alone lead to the way to self-realization or *mokṣa*. He unhesitatingly remarked: That which is to be found, more or less, spread out here and there in Hindu religious books has been brought out in clearest possible language in the *Gītā* even at the risk of repetition.'[7]

Renunciation is deemed by Gandhiji as a 'matchless remedy'. Again on further elaboration, 'It is the centre round

5. *Young India* (6-8-1931).
6. From Yeravada Mandir.
7. *Gītā According to Gandhi* By Mahadev Desai, p. 129.

which the *Gītā* is woven. The renunciation is the central sun, round which devotion, knowledge and the rest revolve like planets.'[8]

Devotion or *bhakti* occupies an equally important place in Gandhiji's religious outlook in general. Rather his description of a devotee or *bhakta* strikes us in no way different from what a *sthīthaprajña*, according to the *Gītā*, has been described. The qualities of a devotee reeled off by Gandhiji is itself a compendium of the most enduring traits of a highly evolved soul. A devotee is thus characterised: 'He is the devotee, who is jealous of none, who is a fount of mercy, who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is always contented, whose resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread, who is not afraid of others, who is free from exultation, sorrow and fear. Who is pure, who is versed in action and yet remains unaffected by it, who renounces all fruit, good or bad, who treats friend and foe alike, who is untouched by respect or disrespect, who is not puffed up by praise, who does not go under when people speak ill of him, who loves silence and solitude, who has a disciplined reason; such devotion is inconsistent with existence at the same time of strong attachments.'[9]

One other noteworthy feature of Gandhiji's thesis for attaining eternal freedom and peace is that the prerequisites or *sādhanas* mentioned in the Ātmavidyā-Śāstras are not in any way apart; because salvation and the prerequisite conditions of the mind are almost identical to him. 'Gandhi, by raising morality from a mere pre-requisite of spirituality to spirituality itself, brought about a decisive change in values which anticipated the needs of the future', so acclaims a German Writer, Hans Steche, writing in the volume *Mahatma Gandhi As Germans See Him*. A true *bhakta* to Gandhi is also a *jñānin*, 'Self-realisation is not something apart.' A *guṇātīta* as described in Discourse XIV of the *Gītā* as also a *jivanmukta*

8. ibid.

9. ibit. p. 130.

and a true devotee is according to Gandhiji the 'Perfect Man'. In illustrating the 'Perfect Man' the Mahatma draws an analogy which is both poetic and beautiful. The earliest stage of 'Perfect Man's' evolution is compared to water. It cannot ascend until it is rarefied into steam. But once it is rarefied into steam, it rises up in the sky where at last it is transformed into clouds which drop as rain and fructifies the earth.

More than all, Gandhiji's complete attunement with the message of the *Gītā* for a continued offering of the mind in devotion to God while performing every act is what BG itself as distinct from earlier scriptures, came to deliver to humanity. Sometimes Gandhiji felt impatient in replying to carping critics who raised objections to his introducing religion into politics. If the *Gītā* is scanned with care, it will be found that the Lord himself had exhorted every individual to infuse every act of his with a sense of devotion to God, leaving always the results to abide His dispensation. It is not difficult to cull out verses from the *Gītā* in support of this inflexible rule, as it were, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke.

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन् सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ (XII. 10.)

If thou art not able even to practise concentration of mind, then devote thyself to my service. For even by doing service to me thou canst reach perfection.

Again,

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ (IX. 27.)

Whatsoever thou doest whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest away and whatsoever of austerities thou doest practise – do that as an offering to me.

Students of the *Gītā* itself could notice that what the early Hindu Scriptures like the Vedas and Upaniṣads might

have already suggested in many places are taken up in earnest in the *Gītā* when it exhorted clearly the people to do no act conciously without a thought of its being offered to God. Constant practice of the mind not to be diverted in its aim, of doing things as offerings to Him, will be much more helpful to aid its progress towards the final freedom, than intermittent attempts at concentration and one-pointedness in meditation. In adhering closely to this teaching, Gandhiji felt no moment of his life should be devoted to any other thought except to God. Hence his declaration 'I am impatient to realise myself, to attain *mokṣa* in this very existence. My national service is part of training for freeing my soul from the bondage of flesh.........To attain my end it is not necessary for me to seek shelter in a cave, I carry one about me, if I would but know it.........So my patriotism is for me a stage in my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace. Thus it will be seen for me there are no politics devoid of religion'[10]. It was the peculiar good fortune of Gandhiji that he came upon the *Gītā* while his mind was submitting itself to introspection and self-analysis of an unusual nature at the very threshold of his entry into public work in South Africa. In a profound manner he admitted that 'Today the *Gītā* is my mother. I lost my earthly mother who gave me birth long ago. This eternal mother has completely filled her place by my side ever since.'

However, we cannot be too sure that Gandhiji's idea of the type of human activities and those on which the scriptures laid stress were exactly the same. The scriptures certainly insisted on the performance of duties (rituals) enjoyed by the Vedas along with other activities which an individual may be called upon to do for himself and community. Gandhiji was thinking of all human activities, though nowhere he had specifically mentioned anything in favour either or against the carrying out of scriptural injunctions. He was not particular about them, though he did not actually inveigh against them. Only he desired the accompaniment of a mood of devotion for every act done in the spirit of an offering to God.

10. *Young India* (3-4-1924.)

In a brief talk like this, it may not be possible to dwell upon all the other ideas of the Mahatma in relation to the *Gītā*. If he strained every verse to remove the blot of untouchability from Hinduism, it had no evident basis in his interpretation of the *Gītā*. He had his own personal authority for it as he could not comprehend a civilization as that of the Hindus with perfected codes of conduct and ethical ideals to have retained such an excrescence, as he termed it, upon Hinduism. For normally in the same strain he could have been expected to disapprove of the *varṇāśrama-dharma* concept which has been made much of by other politicians as having ruined India's claim to an advanced or progressive nation. His view of the famous line in the *Gītā*

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः । (II, 13.)

(The four castes were created by me according to their aptitudes and works)

Unlike that of other reformers was of the traditional kind. He understood it as having relation to one's birth and not merely to the nature of one's profession or calling. At the same time he was also alive to the changes that had overcome all the rigours of the caste-system in order to make it more and more obsolete in observance. In clear words of his justifying its historical necessity, he observed: 'I swear by the Bhagavadgita, because it is the only book in which I find nothing to cavil at. It lays down principles and leaves you to find the application for yourself. The Gita does not talk of Varna being according to Guna and Karma, but Guna and Karma are inherited by birth...The law of Varna is nothing if not by birth.'[11]

Other interesting observation of his in his discourses on the *Gītā* may be worth remembering. A few of them can be recollected now for our own benefit. Dealing with अपरिग्रह (non-possession) he stretched its import to include useless thoughts also. In his own words: 'One who fills his brain with useless knowledge violates that inestimable principle. Thoughts which turn away from God, or do not turn us towards Him, constitute impediments in our way.'[12] Speaking of अमानित्वं (humility)

11. *Young India* (17-11-1927)
12. From Yeravada Mandir (*Gita The Mother*) p. 119.

he would say: 'if that expression constituted knowledge and that all the rest was ignorance..............every moment of our life should be filled with mental and physical activity, but that activity should be Satvika tending to Truth.'[13] 'Inborn humility can never be hidden, and, yet, the possessor is unaware of its existence.'

Gandhiji's love of our ancient culture received its strength only from his faith in the unsullied wisdom enshrined in BG. With detachment of soul and love for all mankind, his spiritual awakening equalled that of any of the saints and sages of this land in the past. Asked by a missionary, 'Do you feel a sense of freedom in your communication with God', his immediate answer without a pause was: 'Yes, I do. I do not feel cramped as I would in a boat full of passengers. Although I know that my freedom is less than that of a passenger, I appreciate that freedom as I have imbibed through and through the central teaching of the Gita that man is the maker of his own destiny in the sense that he has freedom of choice as to the manner in which he uses that freedom. But he is no controller of results. The moment he thinks he is, he comes to grief.'[14]

आत्मानुभव or Self-realization to some extent should have been gained by the Mahatma. Else he could not have tried to verify his experiences in the light of the message of the *Gītā*. Indeed, the ever-inspiring words of the Lord have been proved so successfully in no other instance in recent times than in the regeneration of Gandhiji, from an apparently ordinary person, born of this country and attracted to Western ideals in youth, to an extraordinary personage of immense potentiality capable of shaking a mighty Empire as the British and educating the weaker sections of humanity everywhere in the world to become fighters for freedom and truth, through non-violence.

---

13. ibid.

14. *Harijan* (2-3-1940)

K. KUNJUNNI RAJA

THE BHAGAVADGĪTĀ: THE PROBLEMS OF THE TEXT

From the point of view of the orthodox Hindus there cannot be a serious textual problem regarding the *Bhagavadgītā*, as the sacred text is considered on a par with the Upaniṣads, the feminine gender of the term *gītā* itself being due to the belief that the term is an adjective qualifying the noun Upaniṣad, expressed or understood; but to the Western Indologists the text of the *Gītā* has always been a problem, and the attempt to discover the original *Gītā* may be said to be as old as Western Indological study itself. Many of the Western Indologists analysed the text of the *Gītā* and studied the contents carefully and found that the current text of the *Gītā* contains different strands of philosophical doctrines, some of them mutually contradictory, and believed that the present text must have evolved through accretions as a result of interpolations at the hands of various redactors.

Talboys Wheeler felt that the philosophical dialogue is out of place in a battle scence. Holtzmann thought that the original *Gītā* was Vedāntic in content and that the doctrine of *Bhakti* was subsequently added on to it. Hopkins and Keith felt that the older text was a sort of an Upaniṣad like the *Śvetāśvatara* and was later on adapted to the cult of Kṛṣṇa. Garbe, on the other hand, said that the original *Gītā* was a devotional and sectarian one and that the Vedāntic ideas were added on later. Rudolph Otto in his *Original Gītā* pointed out that the original *Gītā* was just an epic narrative and in no sense a manual of instruction. He tried to separate the doctrinal portions from the original *Gītā*. He was able to find eight strata dealing with *Prapatti Bhakti*, *Sāṃkhya Bhakti*, Moral teaching, Doctrine of three guṇas, combination of *Bhakti* with Sāṃkhya, combination of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, Seśvara Yoga etc. Garbe's claim for the interpolated character of 170 verses on philosophical grounds has been examined by Belvalkar *(Basu Mallik Lectures*

on Vedanta Philosophy I pp. 93–100) and shown invalid. Rudolph Otto's attempt at stratification of the *Gītā* text has also been. successfully refuted by Belvalkar in his paper '*Miscarriage of Attempted Stratification of the Bhagavadgītā*' (*JBU*, V–vi. pp. 63–133).

As Aurobindo Ghosh says in his *Essays on the Gītā* (pp. 7–8) it is the synthetic method that is used in the *Gītā*. 'The language of the *Gītā*, the structure of thought, the combination and balancing of ideas belong neither to the temper of a sectarian teacher nor to the spirit of a vigorous analytical dialectics cutting of one angle of the truth to exclude all the others; but rather there is a wide, undulating, encircling movement of ideas which is the manifestation of a vast synthetic mind and a rich synthetic experience.'

The apparently heterogeneous nature of the teachings of the *Gītā*, containing doctrines which seem to be contradictory and which give scope for different interpretations, is due to this method of synthesis adopted by the author of the *Gītā*; and any analytical attempt to explain it is bound to fail.

The traditional extent of the *Bhagavadgītā* is 700 stanzas as is stated by Śaṁkara in the introduction to his *Gītābhāṣya*:

तं धर्मं भगवता यथोपदिष्टं वेदव्यासः सर्वज्ञो भगवान् गीताख्यैः सप्तभिः श्लोकशतैरुपनिबबन्ध ।

The vulgate text of the *Gītā*, adopted by Śaṁkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, by Nīlakaṇṭha and others contains 700 stanzas.

But there is a tradition fairly old which says that the extent of the *Gītā* is 745 stanzas. Keśava Kāśmīrin, who follows the vulgate text of 700 stanzas, says, in the beginning of his commentary, that its extent is 745 stanzas: तच्च गीताशास्त्रं पञ्चचत्वारिंशदधिकशतश्लोकैर्महाभारते भगवता व्यासेन निबद्धम् । तदुक्तं भीष्मपर्वणि षट्शतानि सविंशानि (620) श्लोकानां प्राह केशवः । अर्जुनः

सप्तपञ्चाशत् (57) सप्तषष्टिं (67) च संजयः । धृतराष्ट्रः श्लोकमेकं (1) गीताया मानमुच्यते ॥

This passage cited by Keśava is found in some manuscripts of the *Mahābhārata* in the same form or in a slightly different form. This description of the extent and of the distribution of the stanzas to the various speakers does not agree with what is found in the popular text of the *Gītā*. Many attempts have been made to explain the discrepancy and solve the riddle.

(1) Pandit R.M. Sastri tried to explain the term *śloka* as an equivalent of 32 syllables. (*Allahabad University Studies*, XII. pp. 67–82); the procedure adopted has been objected to by scholars like Tadpatrikar (*ABORI*. XVIII. 357–60) and Belvalkar (*ABORI*. XIX. 336 ff.), the discrepancy is not fully solved even by this strange procedure.

(2) The Suddha Dharma Mandala, Madras, published a text of the *Gītā* in 26 chapters containing the correct number of stanzas (Mylapore 1917, 2nd edn. 1937). This edition is not based on any manuscript material and has been rightly condemned as an artificial fabrication (Schrader, *NIA*. I. 62–68; Tatpatrikar, *loc.cit;* Belvalkar, *loc.cit.*)

(3) The Gondal edn. 1941 by Sivaram Kalidas Sastri called *The Bhojapatri Bhagavadgītā*, which also attempts to reach a text of 745 verses, is claimed to be based on a rare manuscript dated Saṃvat 1598 (A.D. 1541) got from Surat. Here also scholars have questioned the genuineness of the manuscript (Belvalkar, 'A fake (?) Bhagavadgita MS' *J.G.R.I.* I. 21–31).

(4) Belvalkar's attempt to unriddle the 'Bhagavadgītā Riddle' is with the help of the *Gītāsāra* text. He points out that there are two versions of the *Gītāsāra*, one represented by Ekanātha's Marathi translation and the Persian translation by the translators of the *Mahābhārata* under the order of the Emperor Akbar; and the other represented by the Sanskrit commentary of Śrīdharācarya. Taking the shorter version as a sort of appendix added to the *Gītā*, Belvalkar tries to approxi-

mate the extent to the *Gītāmāna* total of 745; but even then he is not able to bring the total extent and the distribution to the various speakers conform to those given (*ABORI.* XIX. 335-48).

It may be pointed out that the verses on the extent of the *Gītā* is not found in all versions. The Bengal version and the South Indian versions do not accept them. Nīlakaṇṭha was aware of it; he says in his commentary on the *Mahābhārata*:

'गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या' इत्यादयः सार्धपञ्चश्लोकाः गौडैर्न पठ्यन्ते ।

Vedāntadeśika has also stated that the extent given is unreliable. Hence much evidence cannot be given to it in deciding the original text of the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The Kashmir Recension of the Bhagavadgītā

It was F. Otto Schrader of Keil, former Director of the Adyar Library, who in his work on '*The Kashmir Recension of the Bhagavadgītā*' published in 1930, drew attention of scholars for the first time to the problem of the Kashmir Recension of the *Gītā*. He tried to show that the popular version of the Gītā to which Śaṁkara gave currency was unknown in Kashmir till about 1000 A.D. and that the Kashmir recension of the text is earlier and superior to the vulgate version. Belvalkar made an elaborate study of the version and tried to show that there is no such recension called the Kashmir recension, that it is only a version and that there is no evidence to show that this version is earlier than Śaṅkara (The socalled Kashmir Recension of the Bhagavadgītā, *NIA*. II. 211-251). Dr. T.R. Chintamani examined the problem again in his edition of Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary on the *Gītā (Madras University*, 1941*)*. It is clear that the difference between a version and a recension is one of degree; a 'recension' denotes far-reaching alterations in the text and transcends the limits of a script or a province. The difference between the Kashmir text and the popular recension represented by the vulgate text is important enough to take the Kashmir text as distinct recension.

The Kashmir text contains a number of variations from the vulgate text. It is the one followed by the Kashmir commentators Rājānaka Rāmakaṇṭha, the author of *Sarvatobhadra*

commentary (close of 9th Cent.); Abhinavagupta and Ānanda or Ānandavardhana in the 10th Century; Keśava followed the vulgate text, though he belonged to Kashmir; Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara, though not a Kashmirian, followed the Kashmir text. (Dr. V. Raghavan, *Festschrift fur Erich Frauwallner*, Wien, 1968, pp. 281–94, says that Bhāskara perhaps belonged to the Karṇāṭaka.)

After examining the variant readings given by the Kashmir text, Belvalkar points out that in most cases the Kashmir variants seek to remedy and regularize the grammatical defects of the vulgate text, simplify and normalize the syntax and smoothen the difficulties in interpretation. He has successfully refuted Schrader's claim that the Kashmir text is earlier, superior and nearer to the original *Gītā* than the vulgate text.

The usual procedure adopted in the critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* is to consider the Śāradā and Kashmir text-tradition as of primary importance; but in the case of the *Gītā* this had to be reversed and the Kashmir text-tradition considered as late and secondary.

It may, however, be pointed out that though the Kashmir text of the *Bhagavadgītā* was not followed in other parts of India its peculiarities were fairly well known to scholars even in ancient days. Regarding the reading परात्मसु समा मतिः for परमात्मा समाहितः । (VI.7) Jayatīrtha says that it was Bhāskara who changed the traditional text of the stanza to simplify the structure of the sentence, since the proper construction of the sentence according to the traditional text was not clear to him.

अत्र भास्करोऽन्वयमपश्यन् 'परमात्मा समाहितः' इति संप्रदायगतं पाठं विसृज्य 'परात्मसु समा मतिः' इति पाठान्तरं प्रकल्प्य 'समा मतिः' इति त्वावर्त्य शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेष्विति सप्तम्याः अन्वयमुक्त्वा, 'पूर्वपाठेन्वयाभाव' इत्यवादीत् । (Guj. Press edn. p. 539).

In his *Tātparyacandrikā* commentary on the *Gitābhāṣya*, Vedānta Deśika states that according to the followers of Yādavaprakāśa there are additional verses in the *Gitā* after verse III.37., and that some of the additional verses are quoted by Nārāyaṇārya also; but he is not definite about their authenticity. He says that Vyāsa has not given the extent of the *Gitā* and that the verses purporting to give the extent of the *Gitā* are not reliable. (Venk. Press edn. pp. 625-6.):

'विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम्' (3-37.) इत्यस्यानन्तरं यादवप्रकाशीयैः 'इह केचित् पञ्च श्लोकान् पठन्ति' इति विलिख्य व्याख्यातम् –

अर्जुन उवाच –

भवत्येष कथं कृष्ण कथं चैष विवर्धते ।
किमात्मकः किमाचारस्तन्ममाचक्ष्व पृच्छतः ॥

भगवानुवाच –

एष सूक्ष्मः परः शत्रुर्देहिनामिन्द्रियैः सह ।
सुखतन्त्र इवासीनो मोहयन् पार्थ तिष्ठति ॥

कामक्रोधमयो घोरः स्तम्भहर्षसमुद्भवः ।
अहंकारोऽभिमानात्मा दुस्तरः पापकर्मभिः ॥

हर्षमस्य निवर्त्यैष शोकमस्य ददाति च ।
भयं चास्य करोत्येष मोहयंश्च मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

स एष कलुषः क्षुद्रः [छिद्रप्रेक्षी] धनंजय ।
रजःप्रवर्तितो मोहान्मानुषाणामुपद्रवः ॥ इति ।

अत्र च

नानारूपैः पुरुषैर्बध्यमाना
विशन्ति ते रूपमचिन्त्यरूपम् ।

यौधिष्ठिरा धार्तराष्ट्राश्च योधाः
शस्त्रैः कृत्ता विविधैः सर्व एव ॥

दिव्यानि कर्माणि तवाद्भुतानि
पूर्वाणि पूर्वेऽप्यृषयः स्तुवन्ति ।
नान्योऽस्ति कर्ता जगतस्त्वमेको
धाता विधाता च विभुर्भवश्च ॥

तवाद्भुतं किं नु भवेदसह्यं
किं वा शक्यं परतः कीर्तयिष्ये ।
कर्तासि लोकस्य यतः स्वयं विभो
त्वत्तः सर्वं त्वयि सर्वं त्वमेव ॥

अत्यद्भुतं कर्म न दुष्करं ते
कर्मोपमानं न च विद्यते ते ।
न ते गुणानां परिमाणमस्ति
न तेजसो नापि बलस्य नर्द्धेः ॥

अत्र 'दिव्यानि' इत्यादयः श्लोकाः नारायणार्यैरपि लिखिताः । 'प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च' इत्यस्यानन्तरमन्यश्च श्लोकः ।

अनादिमानप्रतिमप्रभावः
सर्वेश्वरः सर्वमहाविभूतिः ।
न हि त्वदन्यः कश्चिदस्तीह देव
लोकत्रये दृश्यतेऽचिन्त्यकर्मा ॥ इति ।

एते श्लोकाः सन्ति न वेति देवो जानाति । पूर्वव्याख्यातृभिरनुदाहृतत्वाद् अध्ययनप्रसिद्ध्यभावाच्च भाष्यकारैरनादृताः । न च गीताशास्त्रस्य श्लोकसंख्या व्यासादिभिरुक्ता । अर्वाचीनात्वविश्वसनीया इति ॥

All these additional verses are found in the Kashmir recension (version ?) of the *Gītā*.

The Old Javanese version of the *Gītā* found in the Bhīṣma-parvan of the Javanese *Mahābhārata* actually cites 80¾ stanzas and preserves 56 more stanzas in old Javanese paraphrase. In the case of 71 stanzas there are minor reading differences; only in 4 cases does it agree with the purely Kashmir reading; influence of Bengali pronunciation and mistakes due to the lack of scholarship on the part of the Javanese Pandit are quite evident in the text. Prof. Gonda has made a critical edition of this text giving translations of the old Javanese paraphrases as well. Belvalkar made a detailed examination of this version and showed that the Javanese text does not 'either constitute or at any rate serve as an important fingerprinter on the trail of a *Third Recension* of the *Bhagavadgītā*'; and that it does not help much in determining the ur-text of the *Bhagavadgītā* in spite of its fairly old date. It is interesting to note that it adds after II-59 a new stanza:

जिह्वोपस्थनिमित्तं हि प्रवृत्तिः सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
तस्मादमित्रवत् पश्येज्जिह्वोपस्थौ विचक्षणः ॥

E.R. SREEKRISHNA SARMA

THE ESSENCE OF THE GĪTĀ ACCORDING TO VINOBA

Acharya Vinoba Bhave came to limelight in October 1940, when Mahatma Gandhi appointed him as the first individual *satyagrahi* after suspending the mass *satyagraha*. Gandhiji was an admirer of Vinoba and a student of some of his writings.[1] Vinoba, however, has been a follower and *Cela* of the Mahatma. Both of them were votaries of the *Gītā* and also verbally interpreted its text. While the Mahatma interpreted the *Gītā* in accordance with the development of his ideas of *ahiṃsā* and *satya* through public work, Vinoba Bhave, a first-rate scholar of Sanskrit and *śāstras*, made a synthesis of the various teachings of the *Gītā* with its central point as well as with other ancient *adhyātma-śāstras*. As was the case with most of the political leaders of that time, Vinoba's verbal interpretation of the *Gītā* began in the prison, primarily in the form of discourses intended for the benefit of his co-prisoners, during the Winter of 1944. But as he himself states this interpretation is the result of his constant contemplation of the teachings of the *Gītā* over thirty years.

The exclusive contribution of the *Gītā* according to Vinoba is the ideal of *sthitaprajña*. The word *sthitaprajña* itself first occurs in the *Gītā* and all other ideas of the *Gītā* can be harmoniously synthesised with this ideal. Wherever concepts of *karmayogin*, *jīvanmukta*, *yogārūḍha*, *bhagavadbhakta*, *guṇātīta*,

---

1. Gandhiji mentions that he finished the reading of Vinoba's *Mahārāṣtra-dharma*, Vol. I and II (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIII, p. 184). In a letter addressed to D.H. Hanumantha Rao on March 16, 1924, Gandhiji wrote: 'There is another at Wardha conducted by Vinoba as you know. It came into being because a Vinoba was found.' ibid. p. 261. In another letter dated 20th March 1924 addressed to K.G. Rekhade he wrote: 'He (i.e., Vinoba) is a disciplinarian and discipline may be very hard, but I know that is necessary and beneficial'. ibid. p. 282,

jñānaniṣṭha, etc., are found in the *Gītā*, the idea of *sthitaprajña* is seen forming a part of them. For example, in V. 20, the description of *sannyāsī* or *yogī* includes the word *sthirabuddhi*; in XII. 19, of *bhakta* includes the word *sthiramati*, and so on. Thus two of the six criteria for determining the import of compositions well accepted by the Mīmāṃsā-śāstra, the science of verbal syntactics, namely *apūrvatā* (exclusiveness) and *upapatti* (reasonable synthesis) support Vinoba's contention that *sthitaprajñatā* is the *summum bonum* of the teachings of the *Gītā*.

Nineteen verses (54 to 72) in the second chapter of the *Gītā* contain the account of *sthitaprajña*. Out of these the first (II. 54) is the question put by Arjuna as to the nature and function of *sthitaprajña* and the remaining form the answer given by Kṛṣṇa. Here again, the first verse offers a complete definition of *sthitaprajña*, while the subsequent three verses aim at giving threefold explanation, clear, clearer and the clearest, respectively, of this state. These are followed by ten verses explaining the science and philosophy of sense-control (*indriya-nigraha* and *saṃyama*). The next three *ślokas* give a graphic description of the state of *sthitaprajña* and the last one pronounces the grand result (*phalaśruti*) of its attainment.

It is to be borne in mind that prior to Arjuna's question regarding the nature and function of *sthitaprajña*, Kṛṣṇa has spoken to him about *sāṃkya-buddhi* and *yoga-buddhi*.[2] The former is the science of knowledge of *ātman* and the latter the art of life to attain it. The art and science together constitute the perfect life. The *sāṅkya-buddhi* is like the base, while the *yoga-buddhi* may be compared to the structure on it. The former is concealed and inferred only through the latter which is visible. The progress of the *yoga-buddhi* is discernible through four definite stages: the determination as to the means, single-mindedness without attachment to the results, equanimity of mind and the steadiness of wisdom, which is none other than the state of *sthitaprajña*. The word *samādhi* in the question put by Arjuna is to be taken to mean the static contemplation (*sthita-samādhi*) and should not be confused with *vṛtti-samādhi*,

2. Cf. BG. II. 39.

which is not steady, but ascends and descends periodically. Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras* also aim at this *sthita-samādhi* as the final goal of *yoga*. The first three aphorisms of Patañjali which form the quintessence of his *Yoga-sūtras* do not speak of *vṛtti-samādhi* but defines *yoga* as the 'seer's steadiness in his own nature' (*draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam*). So there is complete agreement between the *Gītā* and the *Yoga-sūtras* as to this central point. The term *prajñā* is also significant. It is to be distinguished from *buddhi* which is used in the *Gītā* to indicate the intellect in general. Intellect is varying according to the objects of knowledge; but *prajñā* is that intellect which is solely engaged in the act of knowing without any reference to the objects of knowledge. Intellect is not capable of giving lead to a single straight path, whereas *prajñā* is. It is like the thermometre which measures the temperature of the person in fever without itself having any fever.

The *Gītā* perfects the definition of *sthitaprajña* by employing the negative as well as the positive method of statement in II.55. The total abandonment of all desires of the mind is the negative aspect of the definition, while contentment in one's own self is the positive aspect. Vinoba observes that the abandonment of desires and self-contentment are complimentary to each other and are, as if it were, interdependent by mutual casual relation. The abandonment of desires in an individual can be had through four ways. One way is to universalize the individualistic desires. This can be achieved by fulfilling one's desires and at the same time consciously allowing others to share the results. For example, with the desire of educating my child when I open a school in my village, I thereby allow others in my village to share the benefits of my action. The second way is to ascertain the strongest desire in oneself and concentrate in its fulfilment by eschewing other desires. The third way is to turn to the subtle by leaving out the gross. Suppose a person is extremely fond of being well-groomed, he can divert this desire to his inner being, his thoughts and feeling. Instead of embellishing his body with external things he can embellish his mind with disciplined benign attitudes and thoughts. The fourth is the purest method which consists in eschewing all evil dispositions and replacing them by good ones. This is what is known as *bhakti* which is always free

of any risk or danger. Thus the *bhakti-yoga* is the surest and purest way to the abandonment of desires. The positive definition of *sthitaprajña* is the self-contentment which is the state of one who has realized *ātman* and which is described in the Upaniṣads by the expressions *ātmakriḍa*, *ātmarati*, etc.

II.56. provides a psychological explanation of *sthitaprajña*. What everybody desires is to attain pleasure and avoid pain. *Sthitaprajña* does not fondle the one and shun the other, but keeps his equllibrium towards both. The desires evolve into three stages, greed, perturbance and fear. *Sthitaprajña* makes himself free of all the three. II.57 and 58 make the position of *sthitaprajña* further clear. A *Sthitaprajña* does not flow along with the desires of mind, but withdraws his senses from their objects just as the tortoise draws its limbs into itself when danger is apprehended.

The next ten verses are a commentary on the control of senses, the easy method leading to the ideal state. Here again, II. 59 gives the suggestion how to set foot on this path, and the next two verses caution the seeker against any presumption on his part. II. 62 and 63 give a graphic and convincing description of the series of dangers attending on the person who runs after the sensual objects. The series beginning with the brooding upon the sense-objects naturally ends with total destruction (*praṇaśyati*). The next two verses bring out another series which runs quite opposite to the former one. This begins with the sense-control and ends with *prasāda* which leads to the state of *sthitaprajña* (*buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate*). II.66., in the disguise of elaborating on the danger of *buddhināśa*, actually indicates the five values of life: good will, peace of mind and self-contentment, on the one hand, and steadiness of intellect resulting from the control of senses on the other. The next verses reason out how sense-control leads to the steadiness of intellect.

In II. 69 to 71 we have a final description of the state of *sthitaprajña*. Although *sthitaprajña* apparently looks like any other person; his real life is totally different from that of the others. They are two parallel lines which never meet. This is the real import of the enigmatic verse II. 69. which states that the night

for all other beings is the day for the man of self-control and vice versa. Vinoba successfully shows that this verse contains the description of the central point where *sāṃkkhya-buddhi* (self knowledga),*yoga-buddhi* (action without attachment to the results) and the ideal state of *sthitaprajña* fully meet. For the terms *paśyan, muni* and *saṃyamī* indicate the *ātmajñānin, karmayogin* and *sthitaprajña*, respectively.

II. 70. describes how *sthitaprajña* assimilates all objects of desires into his knowledge, so that there are no external objects of knowledge for him. The concluding statement on the state of *sthitaprajña* is given in II. 71, where the expressions *vihāya kāmān* and *niḥspṛhaḥ* are not redundant. The former repudiates all desires of objects on the part of *sthitaprajña*. Still there can be the desire of life (*jijīviṣā*), even that is ruled out by the latter. Still he lives and acts (*carati*). This is to be understood as explained in X. 9. by *tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca* with reference to *bhaktas*. The grand *phalaśruti* as stated in II. 72. is not a formal one; it is real and significant. The expression *brāhmī sthiti* is noteworthy. This is the natural state of *sthitaprajñā*. There is no moving out of it at any time, even at the last moment of one's life. The meaning indicated by the word *sthiti* is further explained by the words *naināṃ prāpya vimuhyati* and elaborated by the sentence constituting the second half ofthe verse.

Thus according to Vinoba Bhave, the ideal of *sthitaprajna* which is the central teaching of the *Gītā* is the perfect state where *jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti* meet at one point. This is similar to the state of God which can be viewed from three points, as Good, Universal and beyond Good and Evil. In the philosophical language of the *Gītā* these are *sat*, *sadasat* and *nāsat*. These three aspects of God as well as *sthitaprajña* are the meaning of the symbols, *Om*, *Tat*, and *Sat* which are extolled and interpreted in the *Gītā*, XVII, 23, etc.

It has been already noted that two of the six criteria in arriving at the real import of a composition as accepted by the Mīmāṃsā-śāstra can be successfully applied to show that the ideal of *sthitaprajña* is the central teaching of the *Gītā*. Even two other important criteria can be shown to this effect, namely the

beginning and ending (*Upakarmopasaṃhārau*) and the final result (*phalam*). The *Gitā* actually starts from the request of Arjuna, who proclaims himself as one confused in mind (*dharmasammmmu-dhacetāḥ*) to instruct him as to the right direction (*śādhi*). The discourse ends with Arjuna's submission that his confusion is over (*naṣṭo mohaḥ*) and he has recovered his *smṛti* the result of which is the freedom from all doubts (*gatasaṃdehaḥ*). Then Arjuna acts but not as a man who is carried away by his desires but as one whose knowledge, action and the detachment from its results converge upon the natural state of *ātman*, *sthitaprajñatā*.

A Brief Report of the Seminar on the Bhagavadgītā

The Gītā Samīkṣā, the fifth Seminar under the auspices of the Department of Sanskrit, was held on the 7th, 8th and 9th of March, 1970, in the Sri Venkateswara University College, Tirupati. The Seminar was inaugurated by Dr. D. Jaganatha Reddy, M.D., F.A.M.S., M.C. (Path), Vice-Chancellor, S.V. University, Tirupati. Sri M. Anantasayanam Ayyangar, Chairman, Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati, presided.

On 7th March, 1970, Dr. K.K. Raja, Dr. A G. Krishna Warrier and Dr. V. Anjaneya Sarma presented their papers when Dr. B.R. Sharma presided over the session. The same day General Lectures were delivered under the Presidentship of Dr. M.V. Rama Sarma, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, S.V. University, by Sri S. Subba Rao in English and by Panditaraja D.T. Tatacharya in Sanskrit.

On 8th March, 1970, Dr. V. Subba Rao presided over the forenoon session when Dr. S S. Raghavachar, Prof. Syed Mohideen Shah, Dr. G. Marulasiddhaiah, Sri K. Dakshinamurthy and Dr. P. Sriramamurthy presented their papers. Dr. V. Anjaneya Sarma read the paper of Right Rev. A.J. Appasamy who did not attend the Seminar. The evening session on the same day was presided over by Prof. S.S. Raghavachar when the general lectures were delivered by Prof. R Ramanujacharya in English and by Sri Prativadibhayankaram Annangarachariar in Sanskrit. This was followed by the rendering of devotional songs by Vidwan D. Pasupati and Party.

The morning session of the 9th March was presided over by Dr. C.S. Venkateswaran. Dr. K C. Varadachari, Prof. K.T. Pandurangi, Dr. V. Varadachari, Prof K. Chandrasekharan, Sri T.K. Gopalaswami Ayyangar and Dr. E.R. Sreekrishna Sarma presented their papers. The General Lectures were delivered in the evening by Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao in English and Prof. C.S Venkateswaran in Sanskrit Prof. K. Neelakantam Principal, S.V.U. College, presided.

There were recitations from the *Gītā* by the children of the Central School, Tirupati, during each session.

